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East edition No 788

TRANSPORT

MP wants brakes on Stack review

Fresh twist in saga over lorry park proposals

HOUSING

Riverside project gets green light

Medway scheme to deliver 1,400 homes

HALLOWEEN

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We have to build more housing, the trick is how?

THERE is a perception that by exiting the EU, we will suddenly find the number of people living and moving here reduce to far more manageable levels.

The reality, according to figures released this week by the Office for National Statistics, is that its best guess will see the population rise by another 7.3 million people by 2041 - the bulk (around 77 per cent) will be inward migration.

We are a modern, vibrant society which benefits hugely from its multi-cultural make-up so it's little wonder we are an attractive destination, especially while the birth rate globally continues to expand at such a pace.

But it does represent an awful lot of new homes which we are going to need.

So you can understand Medway Council's frustrations (see page 12) at government proposals to hike the number of homes it has to build. All councils already struggle with government targets.

The rate of housing development is startling right now. It seems everywhere you look estates are springing up, yet the relentless need for more dwarfs those created.

Of course, Kent is a big, beautiful county, with a vast amount of clear, undeveloped sites. And, in reality, that isn't going to disappear any time soon. But it does change our communities one way or the other.

Not to mention, of course, that as a society we tend to resist, or simply reject, change.

Housing is a problem which is not going away. Population growth globally continues. And everyone deserves to live in a home which is safe and secure. Our planners need to become more innovative to solve a dilemma which is not going to disappear simply because we don't like it.

Editor **Chris Britcher**

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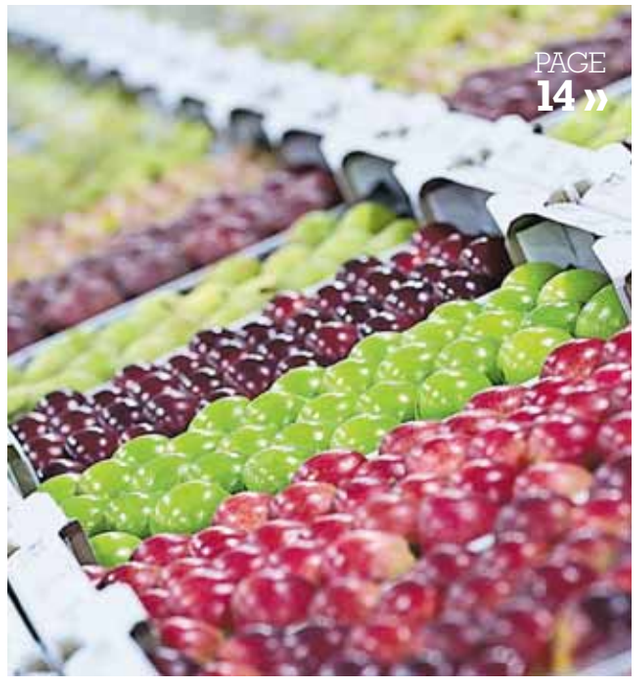

PAGE 14 »

PAGE 11 »

PAGE 08 »

PAGE 16 »

PAGE 12 »

PAGE 29 »

Contents

News

06 **Key Manston decision**
Council cabinet agrees to change its status

08 **Tribute after Syria death**
Mother remembers son who fought IS

09 **Cinema site to go ahead**
Finally, Tunbridge Wells grot spot to be developed

11 **MP in fresh Stack row**
Campaigners angry over latest twist

12 **Riverside gets the OK**
£400m project for some 1,400 homes in Medway is approved

14 **Fruit show's innovation**
How technology could ease Brexit woes

16 **We're part of Monopoly**
Special town version of game on sale now, features this paper

18 **Top 10 fright spots in Kent**
It's Halloween...so we look at haunted places

PAGE 21 »

21 **Pumpkins' purple patch**
The one week crop has a high demand

22 **Guide to our fireworks**
We highlight some of the county's top shows

The Arts

29 **Stylistics still on the beat**
We speak to superstar Philadelphia group

Plus

Letters ..... Page 38
Images of Kent ..... Page 39
Sport ..... Page 47

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Bid to ban live animal exports picks up speed

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

END: Could the end finally be in sight for those fighting against animal exports?

A PROPOSED ban on live animal exports from the Port of Ramsgate has successfully passed its first hurdle in House of Commons.

Conservative MP Theresa Villiers, supported by Thanet representatives Sir Roger Gale and Craig Mackinlay, proposed a bill prohibiting the controversial trade to colleagues on Wednesday.

Leaving the European Union and therefore enabling the UK to create its own laws independently from Brussels was championed by some pro-Brexit campaigners, including Mr Mackinlay, as an opportunity to put a permanent stop to the business.

There was widespread outrage when Thanet District Council, which previously refused to accept cargoes of live animals at the port after evidence of animal cruelty in 2012, was forced by a High Court ruling to resume allowing the trade through the port it owns.

Subsequently, protests have taken place whenever ships carrying live animals take place.

The Conservative government of 1992 sought to restrict live exports and refuse licenses to export sheep to Spain, but the decision was overturned by the European Court of Justice on the grounds that it would breach EU rules on the freedom of goods.

Speaking in the Commons this week, Mrs Villiers said: "Now that the UK has voted to leave the European Union we have the opportunity to make the decision here, in this house, on whether to allow or prohibit the export of live farmed animals.

"But that will only be the case if we leave the customs union and the single market.

"If we do not, we will remain subject to the restrictions that make such a ban impossible today, and that provides a further important reason to respect the result of the referendum and create a new partnership with our European neighbours outside the customs union and the single market."

However, some pro-EU campaigners in the county have claimed Brexit is "unlikely to be a silver bullet that halts live exports".

Green Party MEP Keith Taylor warned last month that other member states of the World Trade Organisation, particularly those that profit from live exports, can challenge any proposed UK ban if they see it as a barrier to trade.

MP demands £1bn from chancellor to get county fit for Brexit

CHANCELLOR Philip Hammond should set aside £1 billion in his budget next month to ensure systems and infrastructure in Kent are upgraded ahead of Brexit, an MP has claimed.

Charlie Elphicke has long called for investment in the county's roads and borders, to help prevent the kind of queues and delays many are fearing will be a regular occurance once Britain formally leaves the European Union in March 2019.

Ahead of the budget on November 22, the Dover MP demanded the huge figure to ensure the county could cope if ministers fail to strike a deal with chiefs in Brussels.

"Being ready on day one is not simply about Brexit; it is in the national interest to ensure that we have fast, efficient networks that will help to drive our economy forward," he said. "It is not just my own constituency of Dover that is affected. Gridlock at Dover will mean gridlock for the British economy.

"The Midlands engine will conk out if it cannot get vital components, and the northern powerhouse will cease to whirr if it cannot get parts on time.

"Tailbacks are not new on the roads to the Channel ports, and this underlines why we should be committing to this spending, irrespective of a no-deal scenario.

"A no-deal scenario without planning could also cause delays, damaging the economy and preventing Britain from taking advantage of Brexit's opportunities.

"Even if a deal is struck, Britain will be hampered if we do not have world-class infrastructure. That is why we ought to be investing in it now.

"In order to enable the greatest opportunities of Brexit to be grasped, we must start preparing for a no-deal scenario right away. This would be responsible, no-regrets spending.

"At least £1bn should be allocated in the budget to invest in upgrading our systems and infrastructure so that we will be ready on day one to forge ahead on day two."

Fifteen men found hidden in back of lorry on the M2

POLICE found 15 people in the back of a lorry at a service station on the M2 on Wednesday afternoon.

Officers were called to Medway's Farthing Corner services on the London-bound stretch of the motorway at around 4.25pm. They, in turn, contacted Border Force officials.

Inside the lorry, they found 15 people aged between 18 and 33 hidden on top of boxes being carried in the foreign-registered lorry.

All were said to be Eritrean or Ethiopan nationals, according to the Home Office. They are believed to have all been men.

Police officials say all those found in the vehicle are now in the care of Home Office immigration officials.

KCC complaints rise...but so do number of compliments

COMPLAINTS about Kent County Council rose by some 11 per cent last year - but compliments about services provided were also up by almost a third.

A report issued to the council's governance and audit committee shows there were 3,424 complaints made in 2016/17, a substantial increase from 3,070 the previous year.

Throughout the year, some £184,178 was paid in compensation and settlements as a result of complaints to the council. Furthermore, 190 complaints were made to the Local Government Ombudsman, an increase of five on the previous year.

However, while complaints were on the rise, compliments about services increased by 31 per cent to 2,714.

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County town local plan finally gets its approval

A CONTROVERSIAL blueprint for development in Maidstone over the next 14 years has been agreed by the borough council.

Members voted in favour of the county town's local plan on Wednesday - despite protestations from two local MPs - which will be used to make decisions on planning applications until 2031.

Helen Whately and Helen Grant both wrote to communities secretary Sajid Javid last month urging him to delay the formal adoption of the plan amid concerns about the impact on Leeds Castle.

However, the council received the all-clear from Mr Javid - meaning councillors were able to rubber-stamp the proposals at Wednesday's re-arranged meeting.

Cabinet agrees to change Manston Airport status, now council gets to vote

By Tom Pyman

PLANS for 2,500 homes and leisure facilities on the former Manston Airport site took a significant step forward on Wednesday when Thanet council's cabinet agreed to allocate the site for mixed-use development.

It came as part of discussions over the Thanet local plan, which identifies potential areas for development until 2031. Previously, it had been designated for aviation use.

The land, owned by bosses behind the Stone Hill Park proposals which submitted a planning application last year, has also long been eyed up by RiverOak Strategic Partners, which wants to re-open the site for aviation use, and is currently looking to secure a development consent order (DCO). Should it succeed, it will over-ride the local plan.

In a report issued to members ahead of the meeting, bosses pointed to a document published by Avia Solutions last year, which concluded

FUTURE: Manston Airport

airport operations were "unlikely to be financially viable".

The report added: "Following the evidence and government guidance, there is insufficient justification to retain the airport designation during the period of the local plan."

SHP joint owner, Trevor Cartner, said: "I would urge anyone with an interest in the future of Thanet to read this report. It is a victory for common sense and outlines in clear detail why developing this site for a mixed use new settlement is essential.

"Stone Hill Park will create an outstanding new community that meets the urgent local need for homes, schools and jobs while enhancing the social and leisure infrastructure across the county."

Angela Schembri, planning director of RiverOak's planning consultant, RPS said: "We continue to believe that Thanet's revisions to the local plan are inconsistent with national planning policy, are not based on an objective assessment of development and infrastructure requirements – and are therefore neither justified, nor likely to be effective."

The revised local plan will now be put before the full council for approval, and a six-week long consultation to invite public feedback on the changes will also be launched.

VILE: Chiron Hutchinson

'Narcissist' rapist starts 20 years in jail

A "MANIPULATIVE and deceitful" former public schoolboy turned sexual predator has been jailed for 20 years after raping two women and having sex with a 14-year-old girl.

Chiron Hutchinson, 20, from Uckfield, East Sussex, was described as a "narcissist" and a "fantasist" when he carried out the attacks in Tunbridge Wells last year, Maidstone Crown Court heard.

On October 2 last year Hutchinson raped a 17-year-old girl twice inside and outside his car in secluded woodland near Tunbridge Wells after meeting her in the town's MooMoo nightclub. The judge said the ordeal could "only be described as abduction".

Just six days later Hutchinson attacked a "very drunk" 24-year-old French woman after meeting her "by chance" walking back towards the same nightclub.

He offered the 24-year-old a lift home but instead parked in woodland and raped her, the court heard.

A month earlier he met a 14-year-old girl, before assaulting her in his bedroom and having sex in Calverley Grounds.

DCI Tony Pledger said: "Chiron Hutchinson is an aggressive, dangerous and predatory sex offender."

He was cleared of three other counts of rape, one attempted rape and six counts of sexual assault.

MP demands no bias in Brexit uni dispute

LABOUR MP Rosie Duffield said she was "disappointed" after a Conservative member wrote to universities demanding they hand him a list of their tutors lecturing on Brexit.

Ms Duffield expressed frustration after Chris Heaton-Harris, MP for Daventry, wrote to vice chancellors across the country, asking institutions to supply copies of their syllabuses and links to online lectures covering the topic.

Many university bosses responded with anger, describing it as "sinister" and "offensive", with another claiming the letter left him with "a chill down my spine".

Theresa May's spokesman insistedMr Heaton-Harris had not been acting as a government representative.

The Canterbury MP said: "I stand behind all universities in Canterbury and champion the right of academics to research and teach around the issues of the day without fear of investigation from political bodies or accusations of political bias."

Campaigners in legal threat over civic plan

CAMPAIGNERS in Tunbridge Wells have hired a top London law firm in their bid to stop £72m plans to build new civic offices and a theatre in Calverley Grounds.

TW Alliance, an umbrella group of objectors, has launched to step up opposition to the plans which they say will lead to borough-wide cuts in services.

The borough council, however, claim these comments are "inaccurate" and is looking to progress with the proposals, which includes some 20,000 square feet of office space.

A TW Alliance spokesman said: "We have instructed leading London chambers Landmark to look at whether the council has acted lawfully in spending more than £4m of public money on plans for a theatre development without first ensuring that there was sufficient access for HGVs and coaches We're not anti-progress, we just want the council to be accountable, transparent, competent and honest."

The council denies the claims and say an upcoming report will ease concerns.

We didn't steal Bake Off, says Channel 4

CHIEF executive officer of Channel 4, David Abraham, has hit out at claims they "stole" the Great British Bake Off from the BBC.

The controversial switch was announced last year and saw judge Mary Berry and presenters Mel Giedroyc and Sue Perkins depart the popular programme.

Paul Hollywood, however, who lives near Canterbury, chose to remain in place alongside new additions Prue Leith and Noel Fielding, as well as Sandi Toksvig, who owns a house in Herne Bay.

Mr Abraham said the show's production company, Love Productions, had already decided they were leaving the BBC before Channel 4 made their bid to take it over.

He said: "We didn't steal Bake Off from the BBC. The show is made by an independent producer...We only intervened at the point the decision was being made to leave the BBC.

He added: "This was not a snatch from the BBC. This was a consequence of market forces at play."

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Doorstep shooting 17 years ago finally sees guilty verdict

By Tom Pyman
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A MAN who fled to Spain following the shooting of a Gravesend resident almost 17 years ago has been found guilty of conspiracy to murder.

Leonard Naylor, 46, died from multiple gunshot wounds after a masked hitman opened fire on the driveway of his home in Istead Rise, in April 2001.

Cold case investigators continued to review the evidence in the years that followed, and in early 2017 presented a case to the Crown Prosecution Service for charges to be brought against four men they believed to have been involved in Mr Naylor's death.

Terence Barry, 44, of no fixed address, was subsequently charged with conspiracy to murder and was convicted following a lengthy trial at Blackfriars Crown Court, in London, on Wednesday.

Robert Blackwell, 52, from Plaistow, London, and David Carvell, 52, from Colchester in Essex, were both found not guilty by the jury while the case against a fourth suspect was dismissed at an earlier hearing.

Detectives discovered that preparations for Mr Naylor's murder began in January 2001, when they believe Barry was recruited to help carry out the offence.

JUSTICE: Victim Leonard Naylor, left, and Terence Barry, guilty of conspiracy to murder

A number of vehicles were purchased including two used during the attack on Mr Naylor, using false names and addresses.

On April 18 2001, Mr Naylor drove to his home in Bracondale Avenue, parked his car on the driveway and got out.

A masked man then approached him from a small van that had stopped at the address and shot him four times at close range.

The killer then returned to the van, which was driven away by an accomplice. The vehicle was later found abandoned and burnt out nearby, with a separate car used by the offenders to leave the county.

Barry, who was known as Terrence Richardson at the time, then fled to Spain before returning to the UK in 2013.

Enquiries into Mr Naylor's murder recommenced when detectives learned he was back in the country, and he was arrested with the other suspects on March 7 this year in Essex.

Barry's sentencing hearing has not yet been scheduled.

Gritters take part in dry run for winter

SIXTY gritting lorries took to the county's streets on Wednesday for a test run ahead of the winter weather.

Drivers took part in a dry run with key routes to ensure systems and vehicles were working to plan. Organised by Kent County Council, the authority grits around a third of the county's road network when temperatures plunge to ensure key routes are kept clear.

Duo killed in horror smash on the A299

TWO people have been killed following a smash in Minster, near Manston Airport, on Monday.

A 49-year-old man and a 21-year-old woman from the Broadstairs area, were killed after being hit on the A299 Hengist Way at around 9.10pm.

Police want to hear from any witnesses to the incident.

Adjust your clocks

DON'T forget to adjust your watch this weekend, as the clocks go back.

We will gain an hour at around 2am on Sunday morning - making the mornings a little brighter - but the evenings darker, sparking the normal debate over safety.

We'll now have to wait until the end of March next year for the clocks to go forward an hour.

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Tribute as son falls fighting IS in Syrian city of Raqqa

A MOTHER has paid tribute to her son, who was killed clearing mines in the newly liberated city of Raqqa while fighting Islamic State in Syria.

Sniper Jac Holmes had been battling against the extremist group with the Kurdistan People's Protection Units (YPG) since January 2015.

Angie Blannin, who lives in Dover, said she was "extremely proud" of her 24-year-old son, who was killed on Monday and had no previous military experience.

"He stood up for what he believed in and he had the courage of his convictions to go out and do something where he thought that the West were not doing enough," she said.

"To defeat Isis he felt that it was not just a Syrian problem, or Middle Eastern problem, it was a world problem.

"He wanted to go and do something about that and not just be a keyboard warrior."

Raqqa had served as the capital of IS's so-called caliphate since 2014, and had been under the group's control for more than three-and-a-half years until its liberation last week.

Cranbrook teacher found guilty of sex abuse in 80s

A FORMER teacher from Cranbrook has been convicted of sexually assaulting pupils in their own homes during the 1980s.

Geoffrey Oborn was employed to give private maths tuition after placing adverts in a local newspaper, but instead used the time to repeatedly abuse children in his care.

Oborn, now aged 79, and of Wheatfield Drive, worked in his home town as well as other parts of Kent.

A police investigation began in 2014, when a man reported that as a child he was targeted by Oborn at a school in Tenterden. Two women then came forward in December 2015 and March 2016, alleging historic sexual abuse inside their own homes. Oborn was arrested, but denied any wrongdoing.

At Maidstone Crown Court Oborn denied 13 charges of indecent assault against a child and one further charge of gross indecency with a child. The offences all took place between September 1981 and January 1985.

This week he was convicted by a jury of all charges. Sentencing has been adjourned to the same court on December 1.

Detective constable Annie Lefebve said: "Oborn was responsible for predatory abuse against children. He placed adverts in the local press to help find potential victims and then abused his position of trust for his own sexual gratification.

"It has taken a long time for his victims to get justice."

Prison guards get cams

PRISON officers across Kent are to receive body-worn cameras as part of a £3m investment to improve safety in jails.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) revealed this week it is investing £2m in 5,600 cameras, meaning every prison officer will have access to the devices.

Fire destroys kebab shop

AN investigation into a major blaze at a Canterbury kebab house on St Dunstan's Street on Thursday night is under way.

Eight engines tackled the blaze which spread through the three-storey building close to Canterbury West station. No-one was reported injured.

Water discoloured

WATER mains cleaning work in Bearsted, near Maidstone, starts this Monday - and it could cause your water to change colour.

South East Water says it's necessary to properly clear the pipes and isn't harmful as natural deposits are flushed out of the system.

Big blaze in Strood

THOSE living near the Medway City Estate in Strood were told to keep windows and doors shut as a precaution after a fire involving a metal shredder created huge plumes of black smoke on Friday morning.

There were no reports of any injuries and fire crews brought the blaze under control.

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Day 5: We leave for home after breakfast.

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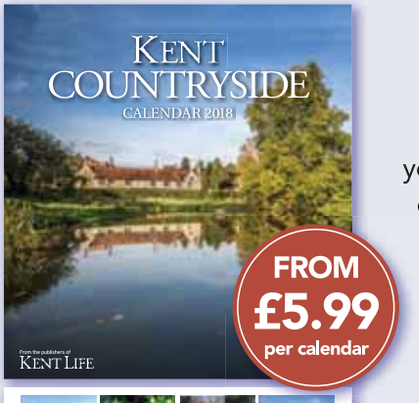

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Cinema site plans are go

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

PLANNING permission has finally been granted for work to begin on on the former cinema site in Tunbridge Wells town centre.

Councillors at a meeting of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council on Tuesday gave the go-ahead for a scheme which will see a boutique cinema, shops, medical centre and residential accommodation built on the site which sits at the top of Mount Pleasant - directly opposite the council chambers.

The cinema closed in 2000 and the site has been at the centre of numerous false dawns, eventually becoming one of the spa town's most infamous 'grot spots' as the abandoned building simply stood empty for years.

A number of plans were touted, but plans never progressed.

In 2014, however, the building was finally demolished fuelling hopes work could start on transforming the site for future use.

Now plans submitted by Altitude Real Estate have been given the green light.

They will see shop space at street level, with restaurants on the first floor, leading to a three-screen cinema.The upper floors would have at least 99 apartments.

GONE: The old cinema will be replaced with working beginning at the end of 2018

Further space could become either office and residential space or a medical centre.

Councillor Alan McDermott, cabinet member with responsibility for planning said: "I am sure most people will be thinking 'it's about time' and I am in complete agreement. The scheme is well thought through and considered viable for this site, I look forward to seeing work commence and the grot spot become history."

Stephen Tillman, director for Altitude, added: "We welcome the planning committee's decision. We were committed to presenting a scheme that would win favour with the committee and reflect the views of the majority of people who participated in the consultation events we held.

"There is real excitement regarding the amount of investment being made in Tunbridge Wells and our scheme is a further vote of confidence in the future prosperity of such an attractive location."

Work on site is expected to start at the end of 2018 and take 36 months.

Five-year deal for ferry route

A FIVE-year contract to operate passenger ferries between Gravesend and Tilbury has been agreed.

The service, used by around 200 passengers every day, needs subsidy from local authorities to sustain its operation, and received the necessary backing from Kent County Council and Thurrock Council this week.

Following a tender process, the councils have announced that a contract has been agreed with Jetstream Tours, which has been providing the service on a short term basis since a change of operator in May.

Major shingle shift in Deal

BEACH management works lasting up to three weeks are set to begin in Deal on Monday.

Trucks and excavators will be used to recycle material from the north of Sandown Castle, and move it back down the beach to between the castle and Deal Pier.

Some 25-30,000 cubic metres of shingle will be moved to help to maintain sea defences after tides and weather pull the shingle away.

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Westminster 'glacial' in resolving Stack plans

An MP's calls for a fast solution to long delays over the proposed site of a huge lorry park has been dismissed by locals

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

CALLS for the government to agree a swift out-of-court settlement with campaigners to speed up plans for a lorry park to deal with the problems caused by Operation Stack have been dismissed by protesters.

Folkestone and Hythe MP Damian Collins told a Westminster debate this week he wanted to see ministers act quickly to resolve an ongoing dispute between the Department for Transport and villagers affected by the proposals in Stanford, near junction 11 of the M20.

Campaigners argue that Stack - the queuing of lorries on the motorway when there is disruption at the ports - has not reared its head for more than two years, and that one large park, the size of Disneyland, would not solve the issues when it is enforced.

They told us they were not wholly against the idea of a settlement, in which various mitigating factors for the project would be met, but accused the government of moving too slowly to strike a deal.

A judicial review, delayed by Theresa May's snap general election and now scheduled for early December, has halted all progress on the controversial plans.

Mr Collins said: "The location and choice of the site has the support of the district council and in the consultation conducted by Highways England, it received majority support from the respondents.

"Nevertheless, the location of a piece of major infrastructure like that is not to be taken lightly and clearly causes concern and disruption for the people that live close to it.

"I think it has been incumbent upon the government to work with the local community to try and put those concerns at rest - to make it clear that it intends to carry through with its plan to build the lorry park so that we can end the bite of Operation Stack, and give the country the national infrastructure it needs and the resilience to protect this important and strategic route.

"But also that it reaches a settlement with the people that live close to it and are most directly affected."

A handful of residents, living either on the site itself or on the boundaries, are understood to have taken up discretionary offers to move from the government but a number of others still remain in their homes.

At the crux of this particular dispute is Westenhanger Castle, a business run as a venue for events and weddings, which believes it would be blighted by the building of the lorry park.

Addressing transport minister John Hayes, Mr Collins added: "There has been considerable negotiation between the department and the castle owner with regards to their judicial review application.

"Effectively the consequence of the judicial review application, in addition to the general election and other delays, has meant that a year has been lost.

"I would like to ask that the minister will commit that, rather than waiting for the judicial review to take place in early December, a last attempt is had to negotiate...so that a settlement can be reached and the judicial review application withdrawn.

"That would enable work to start on the lorry park and also for the business owner to receive the compensation he is due so that he can move on.

"Given it has always been stated by the prime minister and ministers that it's the government's intention to build the lorry park to give us the resilience we need, I see no reason why the discretionary purchase of properties in Stanford village cannot continue so that residents are not trapped in limbo, but can instead reach a reasonable settlement with the department and then move on in their own lives."

However, Stanford Parish Council chair Matthew Webb, who has been at the forefront of the battle against the project, said he and colleagues had provided the DfT with a document back in January outlining commitments they wanted the government to make, but had failed to receive a response.

"I don't think they will come to us with anything now, given the pace at which they move at is glacial," he told KoS.

"It would take them between now and December to start negotiating. There's no chance of anything before the judicial review. They have done absolutely nothing in the last 10 months."

Despite this, Cllr Webb said members were "pragmatists", accepted the odds were stacked in the government's favour, and that a settlement was possibly in theory.

"From a realistic point of view, if we could get the commitments we wanted, or the vast majority of them, and remove the uncertainty, that would be better than losing and the government building whatever they want," he added.

"Residents want us to fight it because if it's built they fear it will become so many other things.

"If they made serious commitments, residents might not like it but it would not be as scary – the uncertainty is the big scare factor."

At Wednesday's debate, also attended by Maidstone and the Weald MP Helen Grant, government chief Mr Hayes refused to explicitly acknowledge whether he would accelerate settlement negotiations.

He said: "It's very important we offer the kind of reassurance sufficient to persuade those [Mr Collins] represents and others that the government is both serious about these matters and acting with honour.

"The government is in a difficult position because this is subject to judicial proceedings and it would be quite wrong for me to stray beyond the parameters that have been set for me.

"On the basis I will both meet with and write to [Mr Collins] promptly along the lines he has described, I hope he will accept that as not only a gesture but a substantial pledge of goodwill.

"His advocacy of the interests of the people directly concerned is beyond question and it's quite proper to consider that support for those residents, and I'm more than happy to explore that with him."

CALL: Matthew Webb, Stanford Parish Council chairman, at the site of the proposed lorry park

STACK: It's been over two years since Operation Stack was in place on our roads

APPROVED: Rochester Riverside's £400m development has been given the go ahead...but many more homes may now be needed

As 1,400 homes get green light, council told of 29% housing rise

Chiefs at Medway Council have been left fuming after revised figures from the government propose a sharp rise in the number of homes which will have to be built in the area between now and 2035

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

A £400m development, including hundreds of new homes at Rochester Riverside, was given the green light this week, but government proposals to further increase Medway's housing requirement were branded "unrealistic and totally unacceptable".

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is currently consulting on a strategy to help fix the housing crisis, and has suggested Medway Council needs to provide almost 9,000 more homes, on top of the near-30,000 already earmarked in its local plan - a blueprint used to help shape development and make decisions on planning applications over the next two decades.

The proposals, which represent a staggering 29 per cent uplift in the level of housing to be allocated to Medway, were strongly rejected by the local authority's cabinet this week, and the district's three MPs, Kelly Tolhurst, Rehman Chishti and Tracey Crouch, are all understood to have written to the government outlining concerns.

At the heart of the frustration for Medway is the seemingly more intense focus on the south east region, where the average rise is some 35 per cent, compared to other areas of the country, some of which have even seen a fall in their level of housing need.

The local plan, which outlines development up to 2035, includes not only sites for homes, but also the requirement of associated infrastructure, which bosses say would have to be substantially reconsidered were a target of 38,295 homes to be imposed upon them.

Earlier this summer, the council agreed to set up its own housing company in a bid to try and speed up the process of planning and delivery, but meeting current housing targets, let alone potential increases in the future, continues to prove challenging.

Only last month, plans for 5,000 homes on the site of a nationally protected bird habitat at Lodge Hill were scrapped at the eleventh hour, in a move which left Conservative council leader Alan Jarrett furious.

Speaking this week, he said: "Medway, like most of the south east, is an area already straining at the seams to accommodate the originally proposed level of growth, and therefore any increase to this figure will absolutely not be tolerated by Medway Conservatives.

"Whilst the cabinet recognises the need for housing, and is already leading by example through the establishment of its own housing company, the sustainability of the government's plan must be seriously questioned.

"Medway simply does not have the physical or social infrastructure to cope with any increased housing target.

"It is extremely unrealistic of DCLG to propose a change of target in the face of developer's reluctance to build homes, and a current lack of skilled workers to deliver these homes.

"Myself and my Conservative colleagues implore the three Medway MPs, and other Kent authorities and MPs, to follow suit in conveying to DCLG the severity of the concerns we have here in Kent and Medway.

"If the government were to ignore comments from this council, not only would this jeopardise the reams of work that have already gone into the production of Medway Council's local plan, but we face a scenario in which existing housing delivery targets will not be able to be met.

"On behalf of Medway residents, the Conservative group will not stand idly by whilst our green spaces and our housing market are decimated."

The council was backed in its opposition to the proposals by the Kent branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

Vice-chairman Richard Knox-Johnston said: "We welcome Medway Council's statement as a first realistic reaction to the increased housing demand it has been allocated and the problems it will cause.

"CPRE has been saying for some time that the infrastructure is simply not sufficient to deal with the proposed new figures, while the DCLG approach does not address the real needs of young people and young families."

The warning comes after planning permission was this week granted for one of the council's flagship projects at Rochester Riverside.

Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd & The Hyde Group, chosen by the local authority to deliver up to 1,400 homes and other facilities, submitted the application in July and were given the green light by planning chiefs on Wednesday.

The submission was a 'hybrid' planning application, meaning bosses sought outline permission for the entire project, as well as full permission for the first three phases of the development.

This consists of 489 homes and a hotel, along with 885 sq m of commercial floorspace, site access, parking, open space and landscaping.

Project chiefs also wanted outline permission for the full 1,400 homes, a primary school and nursery as well as a pedestrian footbridge.

The council gave the proposal its approval, subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 obligation to secure appropriate infrastructure and facilities to complement the development.

In total, the council wants commitment to 25 per cent affordable housing over the entire site, £4.5m towards future maintenance of the River Wall, construction of the school and nursery to be completed by 2021, within a budget of £4.5m, as well as a £2.8m contibution towards secondary and sixth form education.

It also wants £2m towards improvements to off site open space, £655,130 towards improving local health facilities, £655,000 towards local community facilities, £214,592 towards upgrading waste services, £313,012 towards deterring birds from landing, roosting and nesting on the site, and £55,486 towards controlled parking zones.

Responding to Cllr Jarret's warning, the DCLG said councils are free to use their own methods to assess housing need if they have "sufficient reason to" and said it encouraged all responses to its consultation, which closes on November 9.

"The simple truth is that for far too long we haven't built enough homes and we don't build them quickly enough – so it's time to fix that," a spokesman added.

"This new approach will cut the unnecessarily complex and lengthy debates that can delay house building.

"It's not a local target, but will help make sure there's a clear and realistic assessment of how many new homes are needed."

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Does future of our farming methods rely on the robots?

It was a celebration of the year's harvest this week as the National Fruit Show took place in Detling, with some very clever futuristic gear on show. So could it help us overcome the inevitable labour challenges posed by leaving the EU?

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

INNOVATION was the name of the game at this year's National Fruit Show, with a driverless tractor and robot packing machine on display in Detling.

Over two days on Wednesday and Thursday, the event showcased the very best of the nation's fruit - including that grown locally.

Satisfyingly, Kent producers took the top three places in the tastiest apple category, with a Jazz apple from Chandler & Dunn from Ash, near Canterbury, winning, followed by another Jazz from Simon Bray at Monks Farm in Sittingbourne. Third was a Cameo from Pembury-based DJ & VL Knight.

Soft fruits success in the summer fruiting strawberries category was won by Coxheath's Clock House Farm.

Around 60 metres of fruit were be on display, but many eyes were on the exciting new additions to the show - the robot packing machine in particular, which is completely new to the fruit industry.

It comes as fears continue to grow over a shortage of available labour, particularly once Britain formally leaves the European Union in March 2019.

Growers told us last month that the number of migrant workers on Kent farms is down by some 20 per cent, and many are expecting that gap to increase with each passing year.

The National Farmers' Union (NFU) attended the show this week and is urging growers to complete their short survey about the need for both seasonal and permanent workers.

Kent NFU adviser Amanda Corp said: "We know the vast majority of our members recruit their own workers from outside the UK, particularly from eastern Europe.

"Nationally, we already have some good data arising from a survey of labour providers. But through our new survey, we want to hear from growers, in particular, who have the greatest need for non-UK workers to pick, process and pack fresh produce.

"We hope to reinvigorate our lobbying on this issue by providing decision-makers with a grassroots perspective from employers within horticulture and agriculture.

"We urge government to take action on three clear needs: the first to mitigate a continued fall in the number of seasonal workers for 2018 and 2019; second to provide clarity on the status of EU nationals working in the UK; and, thirdly, to set out its preferred approach to a new immigration system as soon as possible."

QUALITY: Apples were given a thorough inspection by judges during two-day event

In response to growing concerns, South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay caused a stir at the Conservative Party conference in Manchester last month by claiming that British youngsters needed to show the same motivation as workers from elsewhere on the continent.

He was quoted as saying: "I was struggling to think why wouldn't a youngster from Glasgow without a job come down to the south to work for a farm for the summer with loads of gorgeous EU women working there?

"What's not to like? Get on your bike and find a job."

The comments were branded "sexist" by opposition MPs, to which Mr Mackinlay replied: "I threw in a 'what's not to like' throwaway comment. If they want to take offence, they are more than welcome to.

"We have people who are getting a coach from Bucharest wanting to work in hospitality or food processing but why are we not getting that same enthusiasm in areas where there are high levels of unemployment?"

COLOURFUL: From apples to pears, there was much to be dazzled by at the show - in which many Kent producers emerged triumphant. All pictures: ADY KERRY

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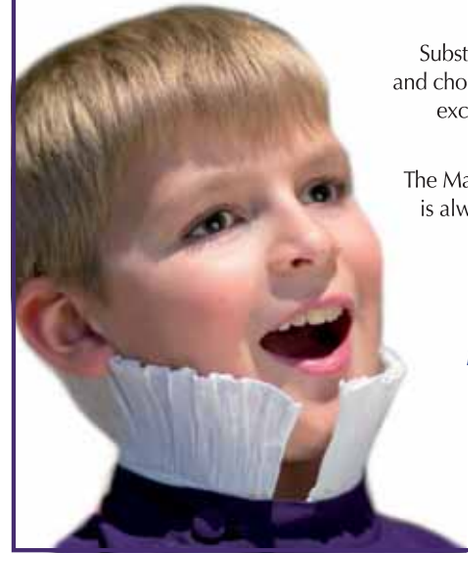

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Houses and hotels set for town parks

Tunbridge Wells has got its own dedicated version of board game classic Monopoly and you can take a Chance on KoS

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

IT's been many months in the making, but a very special version of Monopoly dedicated to Tunbridge Wells went on sale for the first time on Thursday - and Kent on Sunday is featured on it.

But there were some eyebrows raised at some of the choices of locations to replace the classic spaces on the board.

Despite claims the spa town was "way too posh" to feature an equivalent of Old Kent Road - the cheapest property on the board in the traditional game - producers opted for the beautifully manicured Calverley Grounds in the town centre after hundreds submitted various suggestions.

At the other end of the board, Mayfair is replaced by the Pantiles - the town's historic parade which includes the spa which made the town so popular.

CASH: Mr Monopoly meets mayor Julie Soyke at Thursday's big launch

Kent on Sunday features on the Chance space, on which players can receive cash boosts, fines and transfers to other properties on the board.

The launch took place at the plush Tunbridge Wells Hotel and featured an appearance from Mr Monopoly.

Town mayor Julia Soyke said: "This is so good for Tunbridge Wells, we all know Tunbridge Wells is fabulous and we're all very happy here but this will raise our profile even more.

POPULAR: Get ready for family rows as you tackle the localised game

"I hope it will make a fantastic Christmas present this year and stay in demand for many years to come with all the tourists we're going to get, possibly, as a result of this."

Robert Osborne of the game's makers Winning Moves UK added: "The game will be a celebration of – and a love letter to – Royal Tunbridge Wells."

The game retails for £29.99 and is on sale now.

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Notes to editors: The Cinnamon Care Collection is a privately-owned company providing an exclusive group of luxury care homes and retirement properties in beautiful locations throughout the country. Emerson Park is the latest development which aims to help older people live happy, healthy and fulfilled lives through our commitment to combining luxurious surroundings with genuinely caring people in a warm and supportive atmosphere.

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Are these Kent's top 10 most haunted sites this Halloween?

Believe in it or not, we all like a good ghost story. And the county is not short of one or two. At this spooky time of year, we take a look at some of the best

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

IT will have not escaped your attention that Halloween is this week.

So while local children play trick or treat this Tuesday night, why not scare yourself with our top 10 of Kent's most haunted places...

1. Pluckley

The epi-centre of paranormal claims in the county, Pluckley, just outside Ashford, is known as the most haunted village in England.

It claims to have the 18th century murdered highwayman at Fright Corner back nightly to re-enact his death - pinned to a tree by a sword.

The spirits of ladies are common too - there is a Tudor lady, along with a White Lady, a gin-soaked Watercress Woman at Pinnock Bridge who burned, plus the remains of a hanged school teacher, monk and even a long dead colonel.

And don't forget the haunted horse drawn carriage that frequents Maltman's Hill and screaming man who fell to his death at the brickworks.

The village made the Guinness Book of Records in 1989 as the most haunted with 12, but some say it is up to 16.

2. Blue Bell Hill

Known today as a dual carriageway that runs between Medway and Maidstone, every so often, a motorist will report hitting a woman walking along the road in traffic. On closer inspection they find no-one. It is claimed to be Susan Brown, 22, a bride-to-be killed in 1965 on the eve of her wedding along with two friends. Their spinning car hit a Jaguar coming the other way.

Some tales even speak of ghost sightings on the hill long before this tragedy. Some speak of a phantom hitchhiker who is never there when kindly drivers stop, although one man in 1962 talked of a girl in her 20s that vanished once she sat in his back seat.

3. The A21

Similiar story here, for it too claims to boast of a ghost returning to the land of the living following a road tragedy.

This time, it is often an old lady near the A25 junction at Brasted. Like one of those on Blue Bell, she will step in front of cars terrifying drivers into thinking they have run someone over. Of course, looking back, no one is there. She is always in a pale or beige raincoat.

She is, so the story goes, an elderly woman killed on the road back in 1959.

4. Dover Castle

Given their rich and often brutal history, castles are always a good source for ghosts, and Dover is exceptional.

The 12th century castle is apparently haunted by a headless drummer boy. Reports speak of him wandering around banging the drum repeatedly. It is claimed he lost his head in a robbery hundreds of years ago.

The ghostly remains of British soldiers killed in action frequent the underground tunnels too, often wailing in pain and begging to be allowed back to their old lives before war.

Plus there is a monk, a soldier from Roman times and even a lady in red.

Some have experienced sudden drops in temperature and been subjected to 'voices'. The classic mysterious opening doors are common too. Anyone would think today it was some sort of tourist attraction...

5. Hever Castle

MYSTERY: Have you seen the

Hever is a treat as there are few royal ghosts. Anne Boleyn was beheaded by her beloved Henry VIII in 1536, and it is said she still walks the corridors of her home. Her father Thomas has also been seen, and has even been spotted in the nearby village in his carriage.

There are reports that in spite of her brutal death, Anne Boleyn is happy to be home as it was the place of her best memories during life. Her ghost has been reported sitting by the River Eden and

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ghostly figures in the county?

strolling through the gardens. It is said to be more prevalent during the festive period, especially Christmas Eve.

6. Mote Park

Once the estate of a country home 300 years ago, dozens claim to have seen a little girl wandering the park land bathed in a white light. No one knows who she was or why she is there, but one assumes it wasn't for the Maidstone night life.

DEEP: Dover Castle has plenty of stories to make you shiver

A monk has also been seen occasionally in the parklands since the 19th century. One of the most recent sightings was way back during the Second World War when two Canadian soldiers claimed to have seen him in a grey outfit, and ignoring the real world around him.

7. Bilsington Priory

Situated near Ashford, the priory was a monastery in the 13th century and a ghostly monk has been seen going about his business. Other apparitions include some military folk. Once again, it was Canadian soldiers who claimed to see a woman in all her Victorian finery floating through the grounds. Perhaps it's something they drink,

There has been so much paranormal activity over the years that it is now a favourite on ghost hunter tours.

8. Fort Amherst

The Chatham fort dating back to Napoleonic times is certainly a rather scary looking place.

As with all good haunted fortresses, there are plenty of soldiers heard at the site and in its miles of tunnels. Visitors can eavesdrop on the mysterious voices, and perhaps even feel some ghostly neck breathing. Which doesn't sound very nice.

It all makes for a great Halloween location, and the staff excel with their 'jump' nights. All this plus apparitions of women, children, along with their cries of despair add to the terror of the undead.

9. Chartwell

Home to Britain's most famous prime minister, some say they can still smell the musty scent of freshly lit cigars being smoked by Sir Winston Churchill.

There are some who have claimed to have actually seen the great man himself. He handed the home over to the National Trust in 1965, but it seems he never left.

Even Sir Winston once wrote about seeing the ghost of his own father while painting in the studio.

The trust said: "He had been copying a portrait of his father when suddenly he became aware of an odd sensation and there, sitting in his red leather upright armchair, was his father, just as Winston remembered him in his prime." Just cigars you were smoking was it, sir?

10. Combe Bank Sundridge

Back to tales of tragedy and murder when in 1807 Lady Campbell died in a fire and only a thumb remained. This was buried in the ground, and is the catalyst for her reappearances.

She had been cursed by her husband Lord Ferrers just before he was hanged for murdering a steward for turning against him in a messy divorce.

He wanted her to die in a more painful way that he was about to, and so it happened in a tower on the property. Now the lady of the house appears regularly, possibly lamenting the curse placed upon her. Well you would, wouldn't you?

And that's not all.

Honorary mentions must also go to monks at Bayham Abbey, Canterbury Cathedral, plus Dick Turpin at the Dartford Crossing, and a horseman on Dartford Heath, and children at Dode village wiped out by the Black Death, Ramhurst Manor House, near Leigh and Reculver Towers.

More royalty at Knole House in the form of the Duchess of Cumberland, Lady Anne Clifford; a dog at Leeds Castle, dairy maid at Old Soar Manor, Sevenoaks, and airmen at the former RAF base at West Malling.

CHARTWELL: Churchill spook?

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Bumper crop as pumpkins enjoy their moment in the sun this week

We tend to only see the squash as something to carve, but producers across the county say the versatile crop has so much more to offer...and this year's harvest has been good

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

YOU'LL be hard pushed not to see a pumpkin staring out at you this weekend as Halloween approaches - and the chances are many of them will have been grown right here in Kent.

With this year's unusual weather patterns of warm and wet, the growers across the county are harvesting a decent crop.

With prices remaining stable, buyers shouldn't notice much of a change from last year, but the farmers are still wishing there was a market for the striking orange vegetable beyond Halloween.

In the meantime, they are making the most of the staggeringly short season.

John Harris, at Broadditch Farm Shop in Southfleet, near Gravesend, told us: "We grow about two acres of pumpkins each year which usually produces about 3,000 pumpkins.

"We use about 600 for our carving workshops during half term week and the rest are sold through the farm shop.

"This year has been a good growing year for the crop with good quality and colour however the wet period of weather through August has led to some issues with a percentage of the crop going rotten.

"They do not like sitting on wet soil.

"Despite this loss we will have plenty of good pumpkins to sell. As with Christmas trees and their life span, pumpkins do not sell after October 31 so any that are left will be ploughed back in."

He added: "We price our pumpkins by the kilogramme although many charge by size. Our prices will be the same as the last year which is 70p/kg.

"Demand is usually steady until the local supermarkets run out then it can be a mad rush as people are desperate to find a pumpkin.

"They start off green and need plenty of sun to ripen them."

And Mr Harris laments the fact they are generally carved up and tossed away. Something another producer is keen to change.

Laura Brady from The Wonky Parsnip in Chatham adds: "We grew, and are still growing, around 20-25 varieties of squashes and pumpkins.

"We sell through of mix of ways - our onsite shop, we put them in veg boxes, chefs and restaurants we work with often have them and we sell a few at farmers markets

"This is proof there's demand away from Halloween, but it's important to educate people that you can eat them.

"A lot of English people haven't had pumpkins or squashes introduced into their diet apart from butternut squash.

"People from abroad seem to know what to do with them and eat them a lot more, especially Australian and American customers."

At the other end of the spectrum is the staff at the Dan Mackelden Farm in Chart Sutton, which supplies around one million pumpkins to the major supermarkets nationally.

Starting off with a single acre they now plant a staggering 200.

Spokesman Jemma Thompson said: "The market has been growing steadily over the years and even now we try to grow a few more than previous years.

"The weather dictates how many we end up with, but it has been good this year, so the six week pick, all done by hand, should provide a decent supply. Two years ago, it wasn't so good - things have improved weather-wise considerably since then. You never know what the weather is going to do.

"A team of about 10 people are out there doing everything by hand.

"But this year we are growing some different varieties - mostly different coloured ones like white or blue, and even some with bobbles on them.

"It seems Brits are getting more discerning about their pumpkins.

"We also have set aside around 15 acres for pick-your-own which was running during October at the farm in Sevington. This is the only contact our pumpkins have with the public, the rest goes to the supermarkets.

"For the traditional orange pumpkin, the market is pretty much zero at the end of October, but there is some demand for other squashes, and we do a few of them, but very few at this stage.

"We do send some to Ireland, but mainly they go to the south of England.

"Obviously being large, it costs a lot to transport vast quantities of pumpkins therefore they tend to only be transported shorter distances."

She added: "It is profitable, but we are not jetting away to the Caribbean."

At Stanhill Farm in Dartford, Toby Williams said they have recently doubled their acreage dedicated to pumpkins to around four acres, and with the early sun this year, looks like harvesting something like 15,000.

He told us: "If we don't sell them by the end of the month, we will be eating a lot of pumpkin soup in November.

"We have had some slightly higher losses this year because of the weather - something like 20 per cent, whereas last year it was more like 10 per cent.

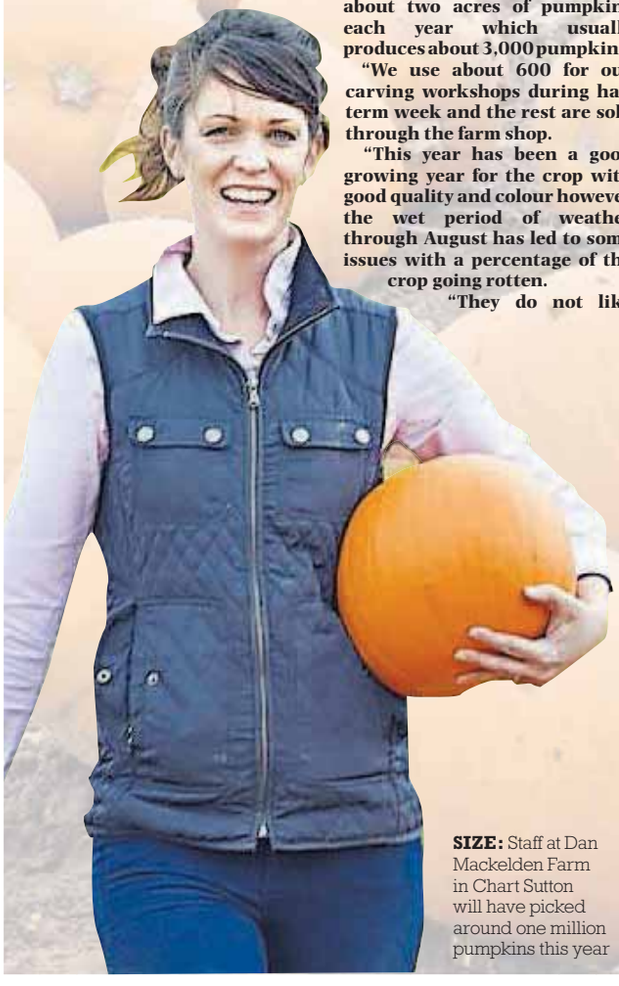
"But our numbers are much higher than in recent years and we will have enough to satisfy our commitments."

At the Wilmington farm, he said: "Around half the harvest goes to wholesale and the rest is sold in the farm shop. They have ripened a bit early, so we are looking after them carefully."

Market analysts Mintel said Brits spent £310 million on Halloween in 2016, up five per cent in 2015, with carving pumpkins the most popular activity over the spooky season.

The nation's top five Halloween activities were sorting out a pumpkin at 13 per cent, followed by watching a scary film on 12 per cent, dressing up in fancy dress or facepaint with 10 per cent of us, and then decorating the home or garden on nine per cent. Hosting or attending a party or dinner party is loved by eight per cent.

Retail analyst Alice Goody said: "The popularity of pumpkin carving, dressing up and face paint creates an opportunity for retailers to tap into the desire for experiences by offering in-store Halloween workshops, such as pumpkin-carving ideas or face painting tutorials."



SIZE: Staff at Dan Mackelden Farm in Chart Sutton will have picked around one million pumpkins this year

BOOM: The weather conditions have been kind this year for the pumpkin growers of the county - but sales will fall off a cliff come Wednesday

How to put the whizz-bang into your Bonfire Night fun

IS it really that time of year already? Look to the skies next week and you'll be sure of a glittering display as Bonfire Night arrives and with it the annual pyrotechnics of firework events. Here are some you may want to visit

ASHFORD

Where: Ashford Rugby Club
Date: November 4
Time: 7.30pm
What: Fireworks, a mega bonfire, real ales, food stalls and outdoor bars
Entry prices: Family £20 on the door/£15 with tickets, adults £8/£6, children £4/£3, under 5s go free

Where: The Farriers Arms, Mersham
Date: November 4
Time: 7.30pm
What: Food stalls and mulled wine and cider
Entry prices: Family £16, adults £7, children £3, under 5s go free

MAIDSTONE

Where: Kent Life
Date: November 4 & 5
Time: 6.45pm
What: Face painting, children's fairground rides, glow sticks galore, a licensed bar & food concessions.
Entry prices: Family £35, adults £11, children £9, under 3s go free

Where: Kenward Trust, Yalding
Date: November 9
Time: 7.30pm
What: Star Wars-themed display and fairground rides
Entry prices: Family £25, adults £10, children £5

Where: Leeds Castle
Date: November 4 and 5
Time: 5.30pm
What: Live music, entertainment, falconry display, maze and play areas and food
Entry prices: Adults £22, children £14.50, under 4s go free

Where: Maidstone Grammar School
Date: November 4
Time: 6pm
What: 30 minutes of fireworks set to music
Entry prices: Family £25, adults £10, children £5, under 5s go free

Where: West Farleigh Sports Club
Date: November 3
Time: 6pm
What: Live stage music, light entertainers, samba band, refreshments, food and drink, stilt walkers, stalls
Entry prices: Family £25, adults £8.50, children £4.50

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Where: Dunorlan Park
Date: November 4
Time: 7pm
What: Food, drink and rides
Entry prices: Adults £6, children £4, under 5s go free

Where: Hop Farm, Paddock Wood
Date: October 28
Time: 8.30pm
What: Funfair, food and drink
Entry prices: Group of four £25, single ticket £10, under 1s free

Where: Glebe Field, Benenden
Date: November 4
Time: 7pm
What: BBQ and licensed bar, bonfire and fireworks
Entry prices: £5

THANET

Where: Quex Park, Birchington
Date: November 4
Time: 5pm
What: Disney-themed entertainment with a fun fair, fully licensed bar, a variety of eateries serving hot and cold food and drink, DJ on stage, large gift and craft marquee offering a range of goods, jugglers and more
Entry prices: Family £34, adults £10, children £8, under 3s go free

Where: Viking Bay, Broadstairs
Date: November 5
Time: 8pm
What: Live music, children's funfair rides, hot and cold food
Entry prices: Free

Where: Recreation Ground, Minster
Date: November 3
Time: 6pm
What: Hot food and drinks and fireworks
Entry prices: Free

DARTFORD

Where: Central Park
Date: November 4.
Time: Gates open at 5pm, bonfire at 7.15pm and fireworks at 8pm.
What: Featuring its own bonfire and fun fair, Dartford's Central Park is hosting its own Bonfire Night on Saturday, November 4.
Entry prices: Children £4, adults £6, or book in advance for £3 children's tickets and £5 for adults.

Where: Royal British Legion, London Road, Greenhithe
Date: November 3.
Time: Gates at 6.30pm, fireworks from 7pm
What: Fireworks, a bar and a

FOOD / BAR
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Entry prices: Free.

SHEPWAY
Where: Capel-le-Ferne Primary School
Date: November 3
Time: 7pm
What: Fireworks along with hot and cold food and drink, tuck and flashing toys
Entry prices: Family £15, adults £5, children £4, under 4s free but ticket needed

GRAVESHAM
Where: Riverside Leisure Area, Community Place, Gravesend, BR3 3SR.
Date: November 3.
Time: Display starts at 8pm
What: Watch fireworks shoot above the Thames on Gravesend's riverside, which will also feature a fun fair 5pm to 10pm and a disco from 7pm.
Entry prices: Free.

Where: St Mary the Virgin, Church Lane, Chalk, Gravesham, DA12 2NL.
Date: November 4.
Time: Gates open at 5pm, bonfire at 6.30pm and fireworks to follow shortly after.
What: Food, tea and coffee will be available at the Chalk church fireworks event, parking at Gravesend Crematorium nearby.
Entry prices: Children £2, adults £4.

SEVENOAKS
Where: Recreation Ground, Edenbridge
Date: November 4
Time: 6.30pm
What: Torch-lit procession, fairground rides, stalls, live DJ and two huge Guys – one is Guy Fawkes and the other is a now-traditional celebrity figure
Entry prices: Family £20, adults £8 on the door/£6 with tickets, children £4/£3, under 5s go free

Where: Hextable Park, Emersons Avenue, Hextable,
Date: November 3.
Time: Gates at 7pm, display at 7.30pm
What: New Town Tigers FC will be selling food and soft drinks the pavilion and light ups will also be available for sale.
Entry prices: Free.

Where: Sevenoaks High Street
Date: November 4
Time: 7.45pm
What: Torch procession and fireworks set to music
Entry prices: Family £25 on the night/£21 with tickets, adults £10/£8, children £7/£5, under 4s go free

Where: Westerham Valley
Date: November 10
Time: 7.15pm
What: Torch-lit procession, food vans and live music
Entry prices: Family £18, adults £8, children £5, under 5s go free

MEDWAY
Where: Great Lines Heritage Park, Gillingham
Date: November 4
Time: 7pm
What: Bonfire and fireworks
Entry prices: Free

Where: Lordswood Leisure Centre, Chatham
Date: November 1
Time: 6.30pm
What: Music and funfair rides
Entry prices: £5 on the door/£4 with tickets

Where: Westmoor Farm, Rainham
Date: November 4
Time: 5pm
What: A range of stalls to accompany the fireworks
Entry prices: Family £20, adults £7, children £5

CANTERBURY
Where: Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence
Date: November 5
Time: 6pm
What: Funfair and entertainment
Entry prices: Family £25 on the door/£20 with tickets, adults £10/£8, children £5/£4

Where: Tyler Hill Memorial Hall
Date: November 4
Time: 7.30pm
What: Fairground rides, coconut shy, tombola and hoopla stalls as well as glow in the dark products, music, food and drink
Entry prices: Adults £6, children £2.50

Where: Hampton Primary School, Herne Bay
Date: October 27
Time: 7pm
What: Funfair rides, side shows and hot food
Entry prices: £3, under 3s free

SWALE
Where: Minster Primary School, Sheerness
Date: November 3
Time: 6pm
What: Bonfire and fireworks
Entry prices: Family £10, adults £4, children £2

Where: New Burlington Ground, Newington
Date: November 5
Time: 7.30pm
What: BBQ and fireworks
Entry prices: £20 per car, £5 per person

Where: Sheppey Rugby Club
Date: November 4
Time: 6pm
What: Fairground stalls, food, bonfire and fireworks
Entry prices: Family £10, single ticket £5, £10 per car, under 3s go free,

DOVER
Where: The Baypoint Club, Sandwich
Date: October 28
Time: 6pm
What: Face painting, fairground rides and BBQ
Entry prices: Family £25, adults £8, children £5

TONBRIDGE
Where: Tonbridge Angels Football Club
Date: October 27
Time: 8pm
What: Funfair, stalls and fancy dress
Entry prices: Family £15 on the door/£12 with tickets, single ticket £6/£5

Where: Trottiscliffe Primary School, West Malling
Date: November 3
Time: 8pm
What: Beer tent, BBQ, tombola, disco
Entry prices: Adults £6, children £3

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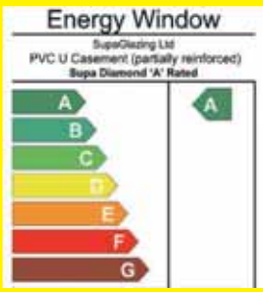

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Mary's top tips to benefit your home

From keeping your washing machine clean to giving your toilet bowl a deep scrub, learn from the queen of the home

IDEAS: The former Bake Off judge is full of ways to revitalise your space

MARY Berry - renowned as the Queen of British Baking - has whipped up a recipe for 'home happiness' in her new book, Mary's Household Tips & Tricks - Your Guide To Happiness In The Home.

She explains: "This book's not about creating more work, or telling people what to do, it's just passing on a collection of tips, things I learnt from my mother, my own ideas gleaned from years of practical experience, as well as helpful hints from friends and family."

Here are Mary's top tips:

Sort it out

"My house is tidy but definitely not immaculate! I like to keep on top of things though, so every so often I'll sort out the chaos in my wardrobe and clear out some clothes. I also clean out kitchen cupboards and drawers every six months - I empty them, use a clean cloth and hot soapy water to wash all surfaces, and dry thoroughly. I'd suggest lining pan drawers with ridged rubber matting."

Iron candle wax off a carpet

If wax has got onto a wool carpet, place kitchen roll or grease proof paper on top of the affected area, then iron it. The wax will melt and stick to the paper. (Take care with synthetic carpets as they don't take well to heat).

Clean your machines

To clean a dishwasher, run a wash with white vinegar. Use around 250ml placed in a container on the bottom rack - just run a normal cycle and it will be like a new machine.

For the washing machine, run an empty cycle to clear the drum, and add a cut lemon to a short empty cycle, to keep the machine fresh.

To pep up your microwave, put a cut lemon in a bowl of water and microwave on full power for one minute - condensation will release stains around the sides and make it easy to wipe clean.

Use nuts to help fade furniture scratches

Break an oily nut - such as a walnut - in half, and rub the exposed area over scratches in the wood. The oil of the nut should help them to fade and appear less noticeable.

Steam clean your floors

"I use a steam mop to clean my tiled floors and I don't think it's too much to say that it's changed our lives. Steam mops are quick to heat up, can be used on any sealed floor surface, and the reusable micro fibre pad collects dirt with minimum effort," advises Mary.

Wear rubber gloves and get stuck in to properly clean a toilet

To remove hard water and limescale toilet stains, wear rubber gloves, flush the cistern and remove a mugful of water from the bowl - I use a tin mug - so you can see the rim of the limescale line clearly.

While the water level is low, pour or spray the loo cleaner around the limescale in the bowl. Make sure you get the product around the top and where water drips down the back of the bowl too. Leave for 30 minutes (or according to the product instructions), then rub with a fine scourer or brush. Pour the water in mug back into bowl, then brush and flush the cistern again.

Keep flowers looking and smelling amazing

When putting cut flowers in a vase, remove any leaves which come below the water, otherwise they'll make it turn green and smell. To clean irregularly shaped vases or containers, use a handful of rice and a good glug of white vinegar. Swirl around briskly, so the rice can clean corners, before rinsing and drying.

Clean windows the old-school way

"A half and half mixture of vinegar and water is a traditional window-cleaning solution and an alternative to chemical sprays. Alternatively, use a window/glass-cleaning spray and a micro fibre cloth, which won't leave bits of lint on the surface

Mary's Household Tips & Tricks by Mary Berry, is published by Michael Joseph, £20.

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GROOVE: Fans can expect to hear the Philadephia group perform all their biggest hits at Chatham on November 11.

Betcha By Golly Wow! The Stylistics are still going strong

Original member Airrion Love talks to KoS ahead of upcoming show in Chatham

NEXT year marks the 50th anniversary of when The Stylistics formed - and to prove you can't keep a good thing down, the soul legends are on the road yet again, with a tour which takes in the county next month.

And it's certainly been a career of highs and lows with a string of huge global hits fuelling a popularity that allows the now fractured band to perform in two distinct - and very separate groups.

The Stylistics which perform at Chatham's Central Theatre include original members Airrion Love and Herbie Murrell - but are not to be confused with the New Stylistics, fronted by former lead singer Russell Thompkins Jr - he of the distinctive falsetto voice. And it would appear there's little chance of the estranged former friends rebuilding bridges sufficiently to reunite.

"There's no relationship at all," explains Airrion Love to KoS, when we ask if fans can ever hope to see the original band members reforming.

Clearly there's some bad blood between the two camps, despite Airrion and Russell touring together just a few years ago.

But that won't stop fans being treated to a set-list including the likes of You Make Me Feel Brand New, Can't Give You Anything (But My Love), Sing Baby Sing and Na-Na is the Saddest Word.

"We've never had a desire to stop performing some of our best known songs for new music. We would never do that," says Airrion. "We understand that's why the people are in the seats. Now if we had a new product out doing well, we would feature a couple of songs to showcase the new CD. But I myself hate when an artist showcases a new CD and doesn't do any or very few of their hits."

Among their big hits was Betcha By Golly Wow - a song covered by Prince in 1996 - one of the very few cover versions the late superstar covered and released.

Did they have any dealings with the Minneapolis maestro at the time of its release?

"We didn't have any contact with Prince at all," says 68-year-old Airrion. "The first time I heard it I was shocked and proud. Any form of imitation is a form of flattery and having Prince doing one of our songs was an honour."

With the band's greatest hits albums whipping up new interest from younger fans, their touring popularity remains undimmed. "It seems every year our fan base gets younger and seeing that interest keeps everything fresh and new. We have fans who have been with us for years, and their children who were raised on that music," Airrion reflects. "I still get that buzz from performing."

But surely there must be part of him that wants to put his feet up on the gold records and just enjoy a more relaxed retirement?

"Well, one of the main reasons we keep touring is that there's still an interest in our music and with that we are kept pretty busy. But we're not touring every day so when there's a week or two off I use that time to sit back and enjoy other interests."

The Stylistics perform at Chatham's Central Theatre on November 11 and tickets for the show are on sale now.

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Women Seeking

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TINA, 58yrs, slim, passionate and kind. Loves eating out. Hoping to meet gent 55-63. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 429167**

VICTORIA, elegant smart black lady. 42yrs, loves life, gsoh, sexy in a sophisticated way. Looking to meet a chap of any age, must have GSOH. **Text Only. Box: 4084600**

JANE, 49yrs, own home, loves nature, artistic. Love to socialise. WLTM gent any age, must have GSOH. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 429165**

JAMIMA, attractive, smart intelligent lady. 43yrs, brunette with striking green eyes. Hoping to meet a mature gent of older years. **Text Only. Box: 4036001**

VALERIE, caring thoughtful lady. Attractive with GSOH. Seeking similar gent. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 429163**

SUSANNA, 42yrs, very attractive well groomed married lady. Works in London, can travel anywhere but cannot accommodate. If you are willing to meet on those terms contact me. **Text Only. Box: 4038007**

ATTRACTIVE lady, late sixties, hoping to meet a nice chap for walking, wining dining, and much much more. Age unimportant ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 429161**

MONICA, strict german lady, 32yrs, wanting to meet a submissive, easygoing gent of any age. South East/London only pls. **Text Only. Box: 4079865**

ATTRACTIVE widow, 70s, solvent, fit and still attractive GSOH, hoping to meet a nice gent for days out, possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 429159**

AISHA, petite Asian lady, just 23yrs, living at home but hoping to meet a sophisticated, well travelled man to teach me the ways of the world. Pls be discreet as my parents are very strict. **Text only. Box : 4003844**

KATHLEEN, attractive lady, 58yrs. Blue-eyed brunette with varied interests. I love life and want a nice gent to share it with me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 429047**

TABITHA, attractive well groomed lady, 32yrs, own house, good job, hoping for some naught text chat with older gent. **Text Only. Box: 4028177**

SYLVIA, 44yrs, curvy busty build. Very respectful. Hoping to meet a good man to love. Call to hear more, I've lots to tell you. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 429045**

ANGELA, 48yrs, seeks no strings casual fun. I have my own house, car and am solvent. I'm busty with a firm figure. You must be open minded, age/status unimportant. **Tel: 0906 515 3015 Box: 427633**

ATTRACTIVE lady, 56yrs. Slim, brunette who loves life. I'm very passionate and loving. Call me if you are interested. I will reply to all calls and texts. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 429043**

MARIELLE, 45yrs, curvy attractive lady, likes older men. I'm married so you must be discreet. Lets meet up, and make each other smile again. Call me and lets get to know each other. **Tel: 0906 515 3039 Box: 426853**

ATTRACTIVE lady, 44yrs, easygoing, solvent with OHAC. If you are down to earth and loving call me. Age/looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 429041**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673**

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ATTRACTIVE lady, 70yrs young, slim, fit and young for my age. I'm hoping to meet a kind gent, must have GSOH, age/looks unimportant. Must be smart and good company. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 429039**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715**

NANCY, 40 something years young. Attractive, fun loving and kind. Hoping to meet gent for trips, particularly around Cornwall which I love. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 429037**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399**

PAULINE, Sincere lady, 70s, GSOH, OH&C. Curvy with shoulder length dark hair. Varied interests, theatre and travel. WLTM similar minded gent. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428977**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375**

KATHERINE, 59yrs, slim, attractive petite lady, loves the countryside, happy with the simple things in life. Hoping to meet like-minded chap, any age. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428975**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365**

ATTRACTIVE lady, 44yrs, loves life, just missing a down to earth man. ACA/Text answered, contact me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428973**

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 426205**

ATTRACTIVE lady, young looking 70s, retired nurse, hoping to find a nice gent for cinema, wining, dining, lives pleasures. I'm very kind and miss a mans pleasures. Please contact me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428971**

CAROLINE, 42yrs, well educated, sophisticated "some call me posh" married lady, looking for no strings midweek liaisons. **Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box 427533**

TAMARA, 44yrs, beautiful Indian lady seeks a Muslim gent 40+ **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428147**

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SHEILA, 64yrs, attractive lady with blonde hair, varied interests and GSOH. WLTM interesting gent. Looks unimportant, must have GSOH. Call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428967**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box 425979**

Men Seeking

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JAMES, 43, genuine, witty, positive, kind and caring, loves travel, socialising, eating out and lots and lots of laughs with the right person, looking for genuine, friendly lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428019**

MALE 60, 6ft, blue eyes, broad shoulders, size 11 shoes, a real handful! Seeks a fit mature busty woman for fun times. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6001755**

THANET male, retired, 5ft5, dark hair, smart, OHOC, likes walks, travel in motorhome, looking for a single, attractive lady with similar interests in Thanet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427557**

TALL, lively old boy, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks tactile lady for company and jolly jaunts. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425021**

MALE, 58, slim build, 5ft9, brown eyes, hard working, enjoys fishing and socialising, looking for no stings attached fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427173**

HI ladies, looking for either NSA fun or LTR. I am single/work/live in own house. **Text only. Mailbox: 4509325**

LOCAL 70 year old young male, now single, nice appearance and dresser, looking for fun and friendship with a lady, 55-70, possible holidays. Can travel. Please ring. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426897**

RETIRED, smart, 68 year old, 5ft5, I enjoy eating out, walking, holidays and golf. WLTM a slim, attractive lady, 60-68, for a loving, tender relationship, to enjoy these times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421853**

MALE divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717**

HARRY 50, ex soldier, 6ft, well built, seeking lady to wine and dine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417015**

50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418641**

GUY, 50, 6ft tall, calm and kind, good company, seeking lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425369**

MALE, 55, looking for no strings attached friendship, with a lady 60-70, any status. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426133**

MALE, 5ft8, brown hair, blue eyes, new to Ashford, been here 3 years, OHOC, looking to get out and about again. Give me a call. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 429105**

HI I'm John, 65, 5ft11, medium build, N/S, driver, WLTM a lady to take out for meals, cinema, theatre and days out. It would just be nice to meet someone. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428991**

MALE, modern dresser, likes driving to the coast and different places, looking for someone 60-70, possibly who can drive same as me, just to go out and enjoy life and have a laugh. It would be nice to have someone on my arm and to bring flowers to. Call me and let's have a chat. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428771**

RICHARD, 55, looking for lady for outings, meals out, pubs etc. New to area and lonely. East Kent. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428631**

NICE looking male, 55, seeks mature female for fun, outings and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 334975**

MALE, 42, married and bored, looking for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428599**

SMART Thanet male, 70, dark hair, brown eyes, 5ft5, OHOC, likes travel, countryside, the sea, walking, looking for an attractive local lady, for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428303**

ATTRACTIVE male, dark hair, brown eyes, 5ft5, solvent, own bungalow and car, likes travel, countryside, seaside, walking, looking for attractive local lady for LTR. Thanet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428127**

GENUINE retired, mature widower, honest, kind and considerate, enjoys most things, walking, countryside, seaside, seeking a lady for LTR, just wanting to share my life with somebody special. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428023**

SOLVENT male, older but young at heart, looking for a young lady to wine and dine and spoil and pamper and in turn to pamper me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427443**

MALE, 55, WLTM a lady, 60-70, for discreet adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 428039**

SINGLE dad of two, WLTM a single mum, for a proper relationship. Please get in contact I look forward to hearing from you. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427999**

WELL off man, wanting a young lady for spoiling. I am a sugar daddy looking for a sugar baby. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 427441**

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LIVELY mature gent, OHAC, near sea in Folkestone, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks lady companion/lover, 58-68 yo. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422621**

CARING, sociable male, 72, N/S, likes all types of music, walking, meals out, looking for a lady for friendship at first. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426865**

KENT man, retired engineer, solvent, enjoys holidays, meals out, good conversation, WLTM a slim lady, 60-70, with a GSOH, to share these times and hopefully become friends. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426887**

JERRY, 66, brown hair, brown eyes, recently widowed, love to walk my dog. WLTM compatible lady for companionship and to see where things go. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426387**

LOCAL man, seeks lady for friendship possibly more, for romantic dates and good times together, hope to hear from you. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426195**

HANDSOME male, mid 40s, dark hair, hazel eyes, wishes to meet appropriate female for fun, friendship and perhaps more, please get in touch if interested. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422587**

Gay Seeking

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DAMIAN, slim, fit, 56 bi male, looking for casual relationship with easygoing guy. Age unimportant. Can accommodate or travel. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6100311**

GAY male, 74yrs, sub, slim, seeks dom gay male, N/S, any age, for mutual enjoyment. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6078625**

MALE, 50s, likes to cross dress, looking for same for friendship and fun. Has to be discreet. **Text only Replies. Mailbox: 4623598**

JOHN, young at heart 65, bi male, looking for casual fun with likeminded male. Maidstone Kent area. Must be discreet. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 5657306**

GAY guy, medium build, likes outdoors, DIY, seeking slim, N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 403267**

EASY going guy, 68, likes walks, books, seeks N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411413**

BI male 68 slim looking for similar male who can accommodate. **Text only Mailbox: 5585368**

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Poirot actor David Suchet to take to university stage for talk

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

ACCLAIMED actor David Suchet will be appearing at the University of Kent in Canterbury next month.

The star - best known for his long-running portrayal of Agatha Christie's Belgian detective Hercule Poirot in the ITV drama - will be the latest guest as part of the university's In Conversation with series.

He replaces controversial government minister Michael Gove who pulled the plug on his planned appearance due to "cabinet commitments".

Widely regarded as the one of greatest stage and screen actors of his generation, the actor will be interviewed about his career by the university's chancellor Gavin Esler - best known as a journalist and presenter for the BBC.

It is a career well known by the actor - his brother, John Suchet, was a long-running ITN broadcaster.

Nor is the actor a stranger to the county. He and his brother both attended Grenham House boarding school in Birchington, near Margate.

STAR: He replaces Michael Gove who pulled out of the event at the University of Kent

While best known for his role as Poirot, David Suchet's reputation was built on the stage, with roles which include Iago in Othello and Tybalt in Romeo and Juliet.

In addition, he has appeared in dozens of roles on both the big and small screen - including a recent episode of Doctor Who.

The event will take place in the university's Colyer-Fergusson Hall, from 6.30-7.30pm on November 3.

Gavin Esler will explore his guest's award-winning career, and audience members can ask questions on the night, or submit them in advance via Twitter using #GavinAsks or email at events@kent.ac.uk.

Tickets for the talk cost £5 (£4 for students). Tickets for a three-course dinner hosted by the university chancellor and his guest, following the discussion, are also available for £35.

He is the latest in a string of big names taking part in the In Conversation with series, which includes the likes of Diana Rigg, Terry Waite, Ian Rankin, Mark Kermode and Jo Brand.

Full recordings of previous In Conversation events are available on the University of Kent's YouTube channel.

Blessed relief with show

BRIAN Blessed will be holding court as part of his latest UK tour in Dartford next April.

The acclaimed actor will be at the Orchard Theatre on April 3 for an Evening With. Tickets are on sale now.

Wrong Jovi hit the stage

BON Jovi tribute act Wrong Jovi hit the stage in Deal next month.

The band, who have won support from guitarist Richie Sambora, will be performing the band's biggest hits at the Astor Theatre on November 17.

Tickets cost £16 and are on sale now.

Lunchtime Philharmonia

FOUR principal players from the Philharmonia Orchestra will perform a lunchtime show at the University of Kent's Colyer-Fergusson Hall on November 8 for a free lunchtime concert.

Fundraising for The Big 1

A BAND is celebrating its 10th anniversary by aiming to raise £10,000 for the Alzheimer's Society with a charity show at Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall.

Local band Realm79 will stage The Big 1 - on December 7, starting at 7.30pm, with profits going to the dementia charity.

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Penshurst countdown

IF you're planning a visit to Penshurst Place and Gardens this year you'll need to be quick - the venue shuts for the season at 6pm on Wednesday evening although walks around estate remain open.

Bay City's Les rolls on tour

BAY City Rollers heart-throb Les McKeown will be performing at Margate's Winter Gardens early next month.

Les McKeown's Bay City Rollers will perform on November 4 and feature the band from the 1970s biggest hits. Tickets for the performance are on sale now.

Zombies head to harbour

HUNDREDS of zombies are set to rise up and head to Folkestone this month for a Zombie Walk for charity along the Harbour Arm. The event, which includes live music, takes place on October 28.

An evening with Bruno

FORMER heavyweight boxing champion Frank Bruno will be the star guest at the Lashings Sports Bar in Maidstone next month.

The fighter, currently promoting his new book tackling his recent mental health issues, will appear on November 30 at the Upper Stone Street venue.

Look who's flying into the Frosted Fairground

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

MARGATE's Dreamland wears more hats outside of the summer season than the Queen.

From full on pleasure palace when the sun is out, it is currently in its Screamland guise for Halloween, before it undergoes another wardrobe change to emerge as the Frosted Fairground throughout the Christmas period.

Festive fun-seekeers will be able to enjoy ice-skating on a 450-metre square ice rink from December 1 to January 3, while Father Christmas will be taking time out from his busy pre-delivery schedule to take up residence in his grotto, complete with elves.

From December 21, there will also be a special appearance from The Snowman and The Snowdog - based on the animated Raymond Briggs film.

And park chiefs hope it will signal a successful end to a rollercoaster year which has seen the park go from strength to strength. From facing a somewhat uncertain future at the turn of the year, after going into administration, it has turned its fortunes around after a £25 million investment which has seen it add a host of facilities as well as hosting some major sold-out music events.

The icing on the cake was its financial recovery and emergence from administration this month.

Rebecca Ellis, director of events and programming at Dreamland, said: "It's been a very exciting year at Dreamland and ending it by providing an amazing festive experience at the park is really important to us. We can't wait to have an ice rink in Margate and to once again draw people to the town outside of the summer season. Locals don't need to travel to London or elsewhere to get that magical Christmas feeling, they will find it at Dreamland."

Tickets for the ice rink, which can accomodate 150 people at any one time, are on sale now. The rink is undercover so should not be affected by the weather. In addition, there will be food and drink stalls plus more entertainment to be announced.

PARK: After major investment Dreamland is back on the up

SKATE: Real ice rink can take up to 150 people at any one time

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How Living the Dream battles the nightmares

Sky unveils its latest show on November 2 as Philip Glenister heads to the US in new comedy drama

EVER thought of packing it all in for a life in the sun?

Well, that's the scenario Philip Glenister and Lesley Sharp were faced with for their starring roles in Sky 1's sunny new comedy drama, Living the Dream.

The original series - penned by the award-winning makers of Cold Feet, no less - follows Brits abroad Mal and Jen Pemberton, who decide to up sticks and swap their rainy hometown of Yorkshire for the US Sunshine State of Florida.

With teenagers in tow - Tina (Rosie Day) and Freddie (Brenock O'Connor) - the pair, travelling on an investor's visa, have big plans to renovate a "booming" recreational vehicle park. But said plans soon go awry when they realise they've been mis-sold the site, leaving them in the hands of its less-than-welcoming residents.

Add to the mix roving alligators, an ex-wrestler with a vendetta, the challenge of joining an American high school, dating politics and a neighbourhood brimming with desperate housewives, and the Pembertons' reality is, unsurprisingly, nothing short of a nightmare.

One of the virtues of the series is the fact it portrays a middle-aged couple who aren't simply "getting ready for retirement", believes Sharp.

"What you've got is a modern representation of people of that age, which I personally think doesn't get much airtime," says the Mancunian actress, 57. "They're people who've still got an eye for adventure; they're still thinking, 'Well, I've got a lot of life left in me. A lot of life that I'd like to live'.

STARS: The comedy drama follows the fortunes of the Pemberton family

"And they like each other, they fancy each other, they like their children," she adds, smiling. "I think what's fabulous about Living the Dream is that accidents happen to them and they've got dramas and pitfalls to get through, but they do it as a united pair.

"I do just think that it's a positive portrayal of two people who are not in the first flush of youth and that is unusual."

"We're on their side, and we're invested in them," agrees London-born Glenister, 54, who still remains perhaps best known for his role in BBC drama Life on Mars and follow up Ashes to Ashes.

Perfecting that husband and wife dynamic on screen, however, was aided by the fact the duo - both industry veterans with the best part of three decades of TV work under their belt - have met before.

"Phil and I worked together in 1999 and 2000 on a series called Clocking Off, so we knew each other as work colleagues, and got on incredibly well then," Sharp explains. "So, what was great about being cast together in this is that we already had a good working relationship and we go about work in the same way."

Living the Dream premieres on Sky 1 and Now TV on Thursday, November 2.

Vintage fair set for city

AN award-winning vintage fair takes place in Canterbury today (Sunday) and the Westgate Hall.

Lou Lou's Vintage Fair will boast a host of stalls featuring items from the 1920s to 1980s plus includes a kitschy tea party and a pop-up hair and beauty salon where visitors can get a vintage-style makeover.

It runs from 10am to 4pm and costs £2.50 to enter. It's free for children under 12.

Wonderful festive film

FRANK Capra's classic It's a Wonderful Life will be making its annual outing at Canterbury's Gulbenkian Theatre cinema in the run up to Christmas.

The movie, proclaimed as the finest festive flick by many, was first released in 1946. It features Jimmy Stewart as George Bailey and will be shown on December 16 with ticket prices ranging from £6 to £8.50. Tickets on sale now.

Messiah in Faversham

HANDEL'S Messiah will be performed at Faversham's Church of St Mary of Charity on November 25.

Featuring a host of top performers, including a choir and orchestra brought together by festival organisers Musique Cordiale, it will be conducted by Graham Ross.

Tickets for the show cost £10 or £15 and are on sale now.

Wedding Present treat

LEEDS legends The Wedding Present will perform at Tunbridge Wells' The Forum on February 2 as the group marks the 30th anniversary of its Tommy album, which will be played in full.

The band are playing just four dates on the mini-tour and will perform the album along with 40 minutes of other tracks.

Tickets for the show are one sale now. They also play Dover on December 6.

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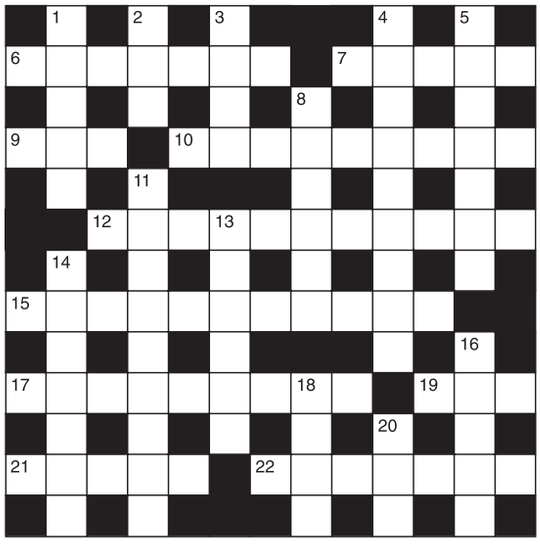
WICKED

PUZZLES

DOUBLE CROSSWORD



Quick

Across

6. Erasure (7)
7. Parson (5)
9. Tear (3)
10. Deterioration (9)
12. Fear (11)
15. Assembly (11)
17. Outlook (9)
19. Cunning (3)
21. Fiend (5)
22. Extol (7)

Down

1. Start (5)
2. Base (3)
3. Detest (4)
4. Way (9)
5. Peaceful (7)
8. Outlaw (6)
11. Supply (9)
13. Parcel (6)
14. Travel (7)
16. On high (5)
18. Story (4)
20. Twisted (3)

Cryptic

Across

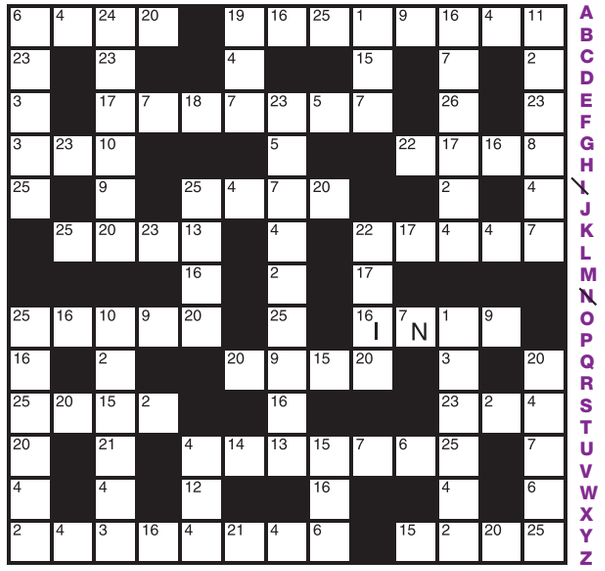
6. Mince pie and preserve for a gourmet (7)
7. Sounds tired of regular meals (5)
9. Essay which won't be pointless (3)
10. Anyway, it's where the customs may look (2,3,4)
12. Legitimate justification for holding entertainment (11)
15. Consort very disturbed by argument (11)
17. He goes to court for a simple quarrel (9)
19. Little fellow not depressed, but confused (3)
21. It is pinned on somehow, begad! (5)
22. Firing range (7)

Down

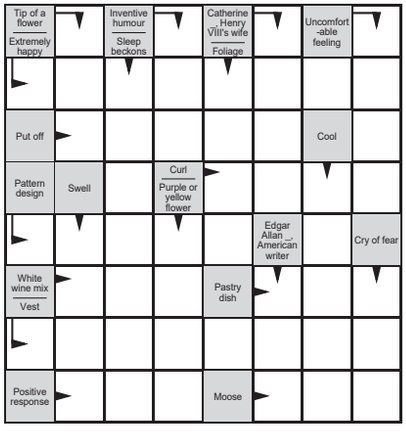
1. Lean over (5)
2. What's done in law (3)
3. A novel sort of mask (4)
4. Crowds study the route (9)
5. Act as chairman but show partiality in advance? (7)
8. False description of the Tower of Pisa (6)
11. Bird which is not all crest (9)
13. The rest of the layers depend on them (6)
14. He has loads of energy (7)
16. Drinking bender (5)
18. Use the wrong sort of tackle, perhaps (4)
20. Custom in America to note (3)

CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



Arrowword



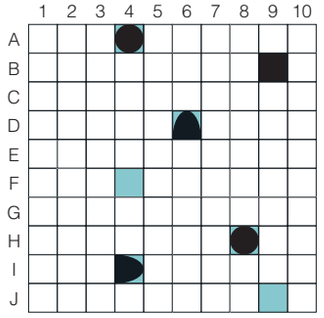
Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Battleships

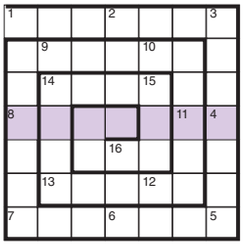
Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET

1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine



Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Sob
2. Shove
3. Quieten
4. Bird
5. English county
6. Sound a horn
7. Body powder
8. Solid block
9. Nobleman
10. Former Italian currency
11. Minute particle
12. Beast of burden
13. Resound
14. Responsibility
15. Eye inflammation
16. Sword

Keyword clue: A feline mammal

SUDOKU

Hard

					8			
	7				2	6	1	
9			5	7		8		
5						4		6
		4		2		9		
2		7						3
		6		1	4			7
	4	1	8					
			6					

Easy

	9		5			3		1
		6		2				9
8		4			3		7	5
	3		9				1	2
2			3	1	4	8		
1	8				2		4	
5	2					7		8
		8		3		9	5	
9				7	5			

Solutions

Arrowword

Battleships

Double Crossword

Cryptic
Across: 6 Epicure; 7 Board; 9 Try; 10 In any case; 12 Fairgrounds; 15 Controversy; 17 Plaintiff; 19 Eff; 21 Badge; 22 Gunshot.
Down: 1 Spare; 2 Act; 3 Iron; 4 Concourse; 5 Preside; 8 Untrue; 11 Partridge; 13 Hoosts; 14 Coalman; 16 Elbow; 18 Foul; 20 Use.

Quick
Across: 6 Removal; 7 Vicar; 9 Rip; 10 Decadence; 12 Trepidation; 15 Convocation; 17 Prospects; 19 Sly; 21 Demon; 22 Glorify.
Down: 1 Begin; 2 Low; 3 Hate; 4 Direction; 5 Halcyon; 8 Bandit; 11 Provision; 13 Packet; 14 Journey; 16 Aloft; 18 Tale; 20 Why.

Codeword
1=C, 2=R, 3=L, 4=E, 5=W, 6=D, 7=N, 8=Z, 9=H, 10=G, 11=F, 12=Y, 13=P, 14=X, 15=A, 16=I, 17=U, 18=K, 19=M, 20=T, 21=V, 22=O, 23=O, 24=B, 25=S, 26=J

Word Spiral
1 Weep; 2 Push; 3 Hush; 4 Hawk; 5 Kent; 6 Toot; 7 Talc; 8 Cube; 9 Earl; 10 Lira; 11 Atom; 12 Mule; 13 Echo; 14 Onus; 15 Stye; 16 Epee.
Keyword: Cheetah

Sudoku - Hard

6	5	3	1	4	8	7	9	2
4	7	8	9	3	2	6	1	5
9	1	2	5	7	6	8	3	4
5	3	9	7	8	1	4	2	6
1	6	4	3	2	5	9	7	8
2	8	7	4	6	9	1	5	3
3	9	6	2	1	4	5	8	7
7	4	1	8	5	3	2	6	9
8	2	5	6	9	7	3	4	1

Sudoku - Easy

7	9	2	5	4	8	3	6	1
3	5	6	1	2	7	4	8	9
8	1	4	6	9	3	2	7	5
4	3	7	9	8	6	5	1	2
2	6	5	3	1	4	8	9	7
1	8	9	7	5	2	6	4	3
5	2	1	4	6	9	7	3	8
6	7	8	2	3	1	9	5	4
9	4	3	8	7	5	1	2	6

AUSTRALIA

Having lived and travelled in Australia 15 years ago, Rachel and Matt Dunscombe returned with their two boys in tow, for a wild, adventure packed trip of a lifetime

It is a place where pelicans parade and turtles and sharks swim within a hair's breath of your snorkel mask.For any adventure loving child – and adult – Australia will leave you enthralled, inspired, and desperate to go back.

Our five-week road trip with our sons George, 7 and Zach, 10, took us 3000km from the ever mesmerising Sydney to Cairns via beaches, national parks, mountains, and rainforests, staying everywhere from a beach front campsite on the Sunshine Coast to a palm tree surrounded motel in cool surf capital Byron Bay.

Pitching a tent is the best way to experience Australia at its most wild – where else would you encounter a 5ft emu, like we did in Yeppoon?

Crowdy Bay National Park, four hours north of Sydney, takes in spectacular beaches and vast untouched landscapes. The campsite is on a huge arc of golden sand with dramatic rock formations. Tame kangaroos hop around, a metre long goanna lizard plods past our tent and kookaburras perch next to us laughing their heads off. We even spotted whales from the headland.

At Lamington NP in southern Queensland, the road climbs treacherously up the side of a mountain into the subtropical rainforest. There are spectacular waterfalls and exciting jungle paths to explore and a free boardwalk takes you (terrifyingly) high up into the treetop canopy. A fantastic night safari from neighbouring O'Reilly's rainforest retreat takes you to an isolated gully where thousands of glow worms hang from the rocks. The boys were mesmerised; torches at the ready in the hope of spotting something deadly.

At Australia Zoo on the Sunshine Coast you can't help but be enthused by the legacy of its late owner, the conservationist and television star Steve Irwin, the Crocodile Hunter. It is as brilliantly brash, big and 'crikey' inspiring as he would have demanded. It is also incredibly hands-on. The boys had to be virtually dragged away from the hilarious wombats, in particular 'Minibus' who they got to stroke. Every day, there is a show in the 'Crocoseum' (yes, really!), featuring some amazing species, and of course the highlight is the huge saltwater crocodile who comes terrifyingly close to the keepers.

Next up was whale watching in Hervey Bay, a haven for humpbacks during their migration south, while our last stop was Cairns, and the glorious Crystal Cascades campsite, perfect for exploring Queensland's lush tropical north.

With temperatures averaging 30 degrees, a daily dip in the free seafront lagoon in the centre of bustling Cairns (you can't swim in the sea) is a must. With a laid back vibe, music, market stalls and cafés, it is a great place to hang out.

Close to Cairns, Trinity Beach is lovely and has a stinger net to add some reassurance – although thankfully it was not box jelly fish season when we were there. The further north you go, the more prominent the stinger and crocodile warning signs. These aren't gimmicks.

A trip further north takes you to the Daintree River and Daintree National Park – a Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. This is crocodile country; we encounter enormous five meter salties and the boys pretend they are explorers on a desert island.

THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

Getting the best access to the Great Barrier Reef with two young children was one of the things we researched most – Heron Island ticked every box.

Two hours by boat from Gladstone, it is home to a research station – used for many nature documentaries – and a low key resort. You can walk around the island in half an hour, yet often don't see anyone else. There are squeals as turtles swim by; then disbelief as a lemon shark cruises past. None of us want to leave.

SOME SYDNEY HIGHLIGHTS

Life in Sydney revolves around its spectacular harbour – from the tourist hub of Circular Quay, where the iconic green and yellow ferries constantly chug across the harbour to the idyllic hidden inlets, historic ports and lush Botanic Garden.

Skip the expensive tourist tours and take the ferry to Manly – it's an institution. Our favourite way to explore Sydney's famous beaches when we lived here 15 years ago was the four mile walk along the headland from Coogee to iconic Bondi. It hasn't lost any of its charm. Don't miss Darling Harbour either, home to the Sea Life Sydney Aquarium and Wild Life Sydney; the perfect introduction to Australia's weird and wonderful inhabitants including kangaroos, echidnas, cassowary, koalas, Tasmanian devils and wombats as well as countless snakes, insects and reptiles. All in all it's impossible not to have a g'day.

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Mr White's flight of sheer fantasy

I MUST reply to the silly letter by Mike White [KoS, letters, last week].

Firstly, I wonder if he has ever flown, thus contributing to the (obvious?) multiple deaths that his flight has caused. I sincerely hope not, or he is a first class hypocrite!

Are the 10,000 deaths he mentions, all in the UK? Or nearer home, in Kent? Despite his obvious detailed research, Mr White is clearly unaware that aircraft these days are cleaner and quieter.

Has Mr White a car, and does he travel by bus? I hope not. Fumes - yuk - so inconsiderate.

I wonder if Mr White plans to have Heathrow, Gatwick, Luton and Stansted closed down, or is he only interested in the poor sufferers who live near Manston Airport?

Unless you, Mr White, are over 100 years of age, you have moved to the "nuisance". Sue your conveyancing lawyers for not warning you about inherent dangers of living near Manston Airport.

John Sherwell,
Margate

Pens at the ready, Mr Duff is back!

SO Colin Bullen appears to have finally lost it after his Brexit tirade last week.

He castigates John Dutton for his previous letter outlining the EU's workings; claiming it was full of errors - but then fails to mention any.

Nothing, again, from Mr Bullen though on the soaring rise in hate-crimes in the UK, including against EU citizens alongside the alleged job discrimination also going on against them, and the overall great insecurity they are feeling. This whilst Jeremy Hunt offers 'golden handshakes' to sorely needed new GPs from the EU which is hardly going to occur whilst the aforementioned is happening.

He complains about businesses, but some have recently said they've upped their worldwide sales over EU ones in readiness. Mr Bullen may claim all could after leaving, but those have done so whilst we are still well within the EU and its current rules which might rather beg the question of are such really being held back that much?

Further, he whines about 'democracy' but every four to five years we have elections at all levels where we have the chance to change councils and governments leading possibly to complete changes in policies.

The above voting also applies to referendums, since a second vote on retaining EU membership, and/or the terms of withdrawal, would surely be fully 'democratic'. Thus in my view it's the rabid wing of the Brexiteers who fear democracy, not Remainers for the most part.

Ray Duff,
Folkestone

And here's more on the subject...

FOR those who are unaware, Colin Bullen, an almost weekly emotional and vehement Brexit and anti-EU writer in all local newspapers, is a self-proclaimed veteran and founder member of Ukip in the early 1990s.

He also received just 3.3 per cent of the votes, and less than 1.8 per cent of the total electorate, when he stood as Ukip's Tonbridge & Malling candidate in the 2017 general election, coming last of the five standing and losing his deposit. I say that to emphasise his background and the nature of his support locally.

He has now stated in this newspaper that my letter about the EU was full of factual errors, but he deemed them 'unworthy of a response'.

So, I now publicly challenge him, as a past (and future?) Ukip political candidate, to itemise and explain those factual errors, and also to say where and how I was, according to him, being 'arrogant', when I simply and unemotionally, in contrast to his latest letter and previous ones, set out some little understood facts about the EU and our relationship within it.

Furthermore, where in my letter did I say that Brexiteers like him are 'morons' and 'gullible fools'? All I referred to was 'uninformed and 'Little Englander' letters'. Do those two 'caps' fit Mr Bullen?

The real reason for his lack of response? He has now called Remainers 'fools, knaves and idiots', including (most, in fact) British business people, whom he says are against Brexit for 'profit' reasons.

According to him the only issue is the survival of his own, obviously ultra-nationalist, version of 'our democracy'. Never mind Brexit's damage to our economy, living standards, meaningful jobs and money for our public services?

Like most Ukippers, and many other anti-EU folk, he is obsessed with what he calls 'handing control of this country to an alien bureaucracy based in Brussels', and he adds that Remainers, including those British businesses, are 'agents of a foreign power' and that if Brexit were reversed, we would 'suffer under a foul dictatorship'.

Contrary to what he says; for me, and many others, his Ukip demagogic and untrue ultra-nationalist words and views seem more akin to those used by those very 'totalitarians' (his word) that we, and our allies, including millions of other armed and civilian Europeans, defeated in 1945.

I now await, with interest and anticipation, Mr Bullen's detailed response to dispute the individual EU and Brexit facts contained in my previous letter, plus others' comments.

John Dutton,
Tunbridge Wells

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Isn't it time to extend the age we can vote?

THERE are many official milestones on the way to adulthood.

We reach the age of criminal responsibility at 10 in England.

Reach the age of consent, can get married or join the armed forces at 16. Drive a car at 17.

Despite this, we tell our young people that they can have no say in choosing who makes these laws on their behalf until they are 18.

A private member's bill has been tabled in the House of Commons calling for votes at 16 and I would urge people to write to their MP to tell them why they should support it.

At a basic level the issue is one of fairness.

The phrase "taxation without representation is tyranny" was a rallying cry for American colonists forced to pay taxes to a British parliament they elected no representatives to.

That same principle is at stake here.

If the state can demand a share of a 16-year-old's income through taxation and national insurance payments, that 16-year-old should, in return, be able to vote for an MP who will represent their interests.

It seems silly to us now that the first votes for women agreed nearly a century ago were only for those aged 30 or over who met minimum property requirements.

It was another decade before they were extended the same voting rights as men.

Those today who argue that 16 and 17-year-olds lack the intellect or life experience to make such important decisions are no different to those in 1918 who warned of the fanciful dangers posed by letting women vote.

In the Scottish independence referendum of 2014 the rules were changed and the sky did not fall in. Instead a generation of young Scots were inspired to participate in British democracy at its best.

What is Westminster so afraid of?

Robert Heathfield
Chatham

Make Nige the next PM surely?

DR Hedges' [KoS, letters, last week] statement that there's nobody better than Theresa May for the Brexit job, is not quite true.

There's one ex Tory whose been at the heart of Europe, has shown he has all the facts and figures at his fingertips, has the guts to stand up for us and has sacrificed all for his country and that's Nigel Farage.

Sadly, the Tory pride means more to them than the good of this country, so there's more chance of the Pope getting married, than them appointing the proper man for the job!

Phil Granger,
West Malling

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent

Tudor House in Margate

by **Ernie Jordan**

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INCLUDED: Escorted Eurostar travel from St Pancras and Ebbsfleet OR flights with luggage from a choice of UK airports - supp't may apply • 4-night full-board cruise on the MV Prinses Christina sharing a twin bed cabin on Main Deck - upgrades available • Transfers abroad • Services of our Cruise Director on board

**Sale price is based on a Free cabin upgrade from cabin deck LSTD usually £499pp up to main deck MSTD usually £599pp.

Rhine New Year Party River Cruise

Cologne, Koblenz & Rüdesheim

By Rail from Ebbsfleet or Air from Stansted

29 December, 2017 - Quote RN12-KOS

Welcome in the New Year with the splendours and stunning scenery along the Rhine on this relaxing river cruise on board the 4-star Mps Switzerland II which hosts you in style with all meals, selected free drinks plus sparkling wine and spirits on New Year's Eve, and entertainment in an informal, fun & friendly atmosphere. This holiday visits the famous towns of Cologne, Koblenz, and Rüdesheim where we welcome in the New Year with a celebration dinner and entertainment.

INCLUDED: Entertainment • Beer, wine by the glass, and soft drinks served at lunch and dinner and from 10am to 1am at the bar • Escorted rail travel from St Pancras and Ebbsfleet OR return flights with luggage from a choice of UK airports - supp't may apply • 4-nights full board cruise on the 4-star MPS Switzerland II • Transfers abroad • Services of our Cruise Director on board

4-star Madeira Carnival

By Air from Gatwick

7 February 2018 - Quote: MC2-KOS

The Carnival of Madeira is known as one of the best in Europe. There are two main parades - the allegoric parade features thousands of participants in magnificent colourful costumes dancing to electrifying Samba music through the streets of the capital, Funchal. The second, called Trapalhao, features carnival goers in daring costumes and local caricatures. Included excursions take in the best of the island.

INCLUDED: Return flights from Gatwick to Funchal with luggage - supp't may apply • 7 nights at the 4-star Hotel Raga in Funchal • 7 breakfasts, 6 lunches and 7 dinners from the buffet, plus afternoon coffee and cake • Drinks included with lunch & dinner - aperitifs, local wine, beer, soft drinks and local spirits • Entertainment on 3 evenings • 2 half days and 1 full-day excursion • Seating for the carnival • Airport/hotel transfers in Madeira • Services of our representative in resort

Malta Carnival, Gozo & The Blue Grotto

By Air from Southend

8 February 2018 - Quote: MG2-KOS

Come with us to the Maltese archipelago for fun-packed holiday taking in Valetta's spectacular carnival, the island of Gozo and the famous Blue Grotto. We stay in a 3-star seafront hotel in Sliema, near Valetta, and make daily excursions to take in Malta's best sights. Carnival is one of the oldest cultural events in Malta. Beautiful and colourful floats depicting peoples, animals and mythical creatures, throng the streets of Valletta with dancers in elaborate costumes partying aboard plus marching bands, costumed children and more.

INCLUDED: Return Easyjet flights from Southend to Malta with 1 checked in bag and 1 item of hand luggage per person - supp't may apply • Return airport to hotel transfers • 7 nights sharing twin or double en-suite room - upgrade to seaview £50pp • 7 breakfasts, 7 dinners (with ¼ bottle of wine pp) & 4 lunches • All excursions

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RUGGED: Country Tourer brings more off-road ability to the Vauxhall Insignia range. Pictures: Vauxhall

Vauxhall launches tough Insignia Country Tourer

VAUXHALL'S rugged Insignia Country Tourer soft-roader estate car, which arrives in showrooms next month, will cost from £25,635.

The Country Tourer has an extra 20mm ground clearance and is initially available with a 170PS 2.0-litre turbo diesel engine, developing 400Nm of torque, with front or all-wheel drive with the six-speed manual gearbox while the eight-speed automatic is front-wheel drive.

A 210PS 2.0-litre Bi-Turbo D, with automatic gearbox and all-wheel drive, completes the powertrain line-up in December.

The £25,635 170PS, front-wheel drive model reaches 0-62mph in 8.6 seconds and a top speed of 137mph with combined economy of 51.4mpg and CO2 of 145g/km.

The £27,235 all-wheel drive version takes 9.3 seconds, goes on to 135mph with 43.5mpg combined and 172g/km of CO2.

Instead of a traditional rear differential, the all-wheel-drive with torque vectoring uses two electrically-controlled multi-plate clutches for a more individual and precise transmission of power to each wheel. When cornering, extra torque is transmitted to the outside rear wheel so it turns in more precisely.

The system reacts within a split-second when the accelerator is pressed, keeping the car more stable and easier to control.

The Country Tourer is more spacious and considerably lighter than its predecessor, thanks to an all-new architecture.

All-round black protective cladding and silver front and rear skid plates give a tough off-road appearance.

The Flexride chassis includes adaptive damping and steering with standard, sport or tour modes.

The tailgate can be opened and closed, in combination with keyless open and start, by a kicking motion under the back bumper.

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Offer valid until 21 December 2017 at participating Dealers only and subject to vehicle availability. Private retail customers only. Finance provided by Nissan Finance, PO Box 495, Watford WD17 1BR. Subject to status. Guarantees and Indemnities may be required. You must be at least 18 and a UK resident (excluding the Channel Islands). Terms and conditions apply, please visit www.nissan-offers.co.uk/termsandconditions or your local Dealer for full details. *£3,500 TOTAL FINANCE DEPOSIT CONTRIBUTION ON NEW NISSAN QASHQAI INCLUDES EXISTING £1,500 CONTRIBUTION OFFER WHICH IS AVAILABLE WITHOUT A TRADE IN AND IS ONLY AVAILABLE WHEN TAKEN ON 4.49% APR PCP NISSAN FINANCE PRODUCT AND IS ONLY AVAILABLE ON THE TEKNA. **Nissan Switch Scheme is a finance deposit contribution of £2000 available with New Nissan Qashqai Tekna. Switch Scheme offers require part exchange of an eligible vehicle (registered in 2009 or earlier) and may be withdrawn, amended or extended in Nissan's discretion without notice. Trade-in vehicle has to be registered to the customer for a minimum of 90 days. Terms and conditions apply, see nissan.co.uk/switch Price includes first registration fee and 12 months' road fund licence. MPG figures are obtained from laboratory testing, in accordance with 2004/3/EC and intended for comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect real driving results. (Optional equipment, maintenance, driving behaviour, road and weather conditions may affect the official results.) Information correct at time of going to print. Model shown is a Tekna with optional metallic paint at £575. Model shots shown are for illustration purposes only. Nissan Motor (GB) Ltd, The Rivers Office Park, Denham Way, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 9YS.

Picasso still revels in art of family life

When it comes to compact people-carriers, you can't ignore Citroen's Grand C4 Picasso…or this laudable load-lugger's wealth of awards, says Andy Russell

GOOD cars win awards, class leaders win year after year. Citroen's Grand C4 Picasso seven-seater has a cabinet full of best multi-purpose vehicle trophies.

Citroen has nailed this MPV concept of practicality, versatility and driveability. That's why it did not mess around too much with the latest version, keeping changes to a facelift and powertrain tweaks.

One of the best-looking, best-driving people-carriers, the seven-seater and smaller five-seater C4 Picasso get a more dynamically-styled front end with the three-tiered family light signature, more chrome trim and wider, lower front bumper with gloss black central moulding for more presence.

Under the bonnet, Diesel has dominated with 100 and 120hp 1.6-litre and 150hp 2.0-litre turbo diesels but two new 1.2-litre turbo petrol powertrains are added – 110hp manual (five-seat only) and 130hp automatic joining the manual.

I rate this 130hp PureTech petrol unit, with a hat-trick of International Engine of the Year class wins, but was cynical about it shifting a fully-laden seven-seater but it proved me wrong. The six-speed automatic has a good turn of speed, when kicked down or shifted manually with paddles, without getting unrefined, and cruises comfortably at 70mph. It returned 38 to 40mpg.

People-carriers are more about ride comfort than rewarding roadholding so the softish suspension does a fine job of soaking up poor surfaces, particularly loaded.

That's not to say it's all rock and roll on twisty roads. The Grand C4 Picasso answers the helm well, remaining composed on twisty roads with body roll well contained, and is not a dull drive.

Practical, versatile load-lugging, both people and cargo, is the name of the game here. The two rear seats, which pull out of the boot floor one-handed, are for children or small, supple adults, while three middle-row seats slide back and forth independently to tailor legroom or load space.

With all seats in use, load space is 165 litres but five-seat mode creates a huge 793-litre boot, rising to 2,181 litres with all five rear seats flat.

The Grand C4 Picasso is likeable and easy to live with.

Citroen Grand C4 Picasso

Price:	from £23,155
Engine tested:	1,199cc, 131hp, three-cylinder, turbo petrol mated to six-speed automatic gearbox
Performance:	0-62mph 10.8 seconds; top speed 128mph
MPG:	55.4 combined
CO2 emissions:	115g/km

C-HR Icon 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2T VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 38.1 (7.4), Extra Urban 55.4 (5.1), Combined 47.8 (5.9). CO2 Emissions 135g/km. Yaris Icon 5 door 1.0 VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 45.6 (6.2), Extra Urban 70.6 (4.0), Combined 58.9 (4.8). CO2 Emissions 109g/km. Auris Icon 5 door 1.6 D-4D Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 47.9 (5.9), Extra Urban 67.3 (4.2), Combined 58.9 (4.8). CO2 Emissions 112g/km. Combined 94.1 (3.0). CO2 Emissions 70g/km. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 57.6 (4.9), Extra Urban 56.5 (5.0), Combined 57.6 (4.9). CO2 Emissions 115g/km. All mpg and CO2 figures quoted are sourced from official EU regulated laboratory test results. These are provided to allow comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

*Model shown is C-HR Icon 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £695 Advance Payment. Available as part of the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Please note that a total of 60,000 miles over three years are allowed on the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Offer valid between 1st October and 31st December 2017.

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- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
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LICENSING ACT 2003

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A NEW PREMISES LICENCE

Notice is hereby given that

(a) Mrs Priyashalini Muralitharan

has applied to Medway Borough Council for a new Premises license to:

(b) For the off Sale of alcohol Monday – Sunday 07:00am – 23:00

For the premises situated at (d) **288 Lonsdale Drive Rainham Kent ME8 9JU**

Should you wish to make representations to the council it must be in writing and/or you can view my application by contacting the council on 01634 337107 or 337108 by 10th November 2017

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £5,000.

Dated: 11th October 2017

highways england

M20 MOTORWAY (NEAR MAIDSTONE) TEMPORARY TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS

Notice is hereby given that Highways England Company Limited has made an Order on the M20 Motorway in the County of Kent, under Section 14(1)(a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 because works are proposed to be executed on the road.

The effect of the Order is to:-

1. authorise the overnight closure of -
   a) the coast-bound distributor road of the M20 between the exit slip road (to the A229 roundabout) and the merge with the coast-bound M20 at Junction 6 (A229); and
   b) the slip road leading to the coast-bound distributor road of the M20 at Junction 6 (A229);
2. impose an overnight 50 mph speed limit on -
   a) the coast-bound carriageway of the M20 between a point 470 metres west and 1350 metres east of the M20 Junction 6 (A229) overbridge;
   b) the coast-bound distributor road of the M20 between the entry slip road at Junction 5 (A20) and the exit slip road at Junction 6 (A229); and
   c) the slip road leading from the coast-bound distributor road at Junction 6 (A229); and
3. permit, during overnight works, and as advised by traffic signs, HGVs to use the outside lane in the length of carriageway described in 2 a). above.

These measures are in the interests of road safety while contractors undertake speed camera maintenance and all associated works.

It is expected that the work will last for approximately 1 night starting on or after Tuesday 14th November 2017. The overnight closures will take place between 22:00 and 05:00 (maximum period).

The Order will come into force on 12 November 2017 and have a maximum duration of eighteen months.

Traffic affected by the closures will be diverted using Cobtree Roundabout, A229 to Running Horse Roundabout, then M20 westbound to Junction 4 (A228) and return.

The temporary closures and diversion routes will be clearly indicated by traffic signs when they are in operation during the works period.

M Taylor, an Official of Highways England Co. Ltd.
Ref: HE/SE/2017/M20/194

Highways England Company Limited,
(Company No. 9346363). Registered Office: Bridge House, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4LZ. A company registered in England and Wales.

For enquiries, please contact the Customer Contact Centre on 0300 123 5000 or info@highwaysengland.co.uk.
http://www.highways.gov.uk

DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 AND ACQUISITION OF LAND ACT 1981

NOTICE is hereby given that a Public Local Inquiry in connection with the Order mentioned below will be held by an Inspector appointed for the purpose by the Secretary of State for Transport **beginning at 10.00 am on Tuesday 21 November 2017 at Ashford Borough Council, Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL** to hear representations from remaining objectors (as defined in the Compulsory Purchase (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 2007), from any other persons having an interest in the land the subject of the Compulsory Purchase Order and, at his discretion, to hear representations from any other persons who may desire to appear and be heard.

THE ORDER is an Order which has been made by Kent County Council under the above-mentioned Acts and submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport for confirmation and is:-

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (A28 CHART ROAD IMPROVEMENT) (COMPULSORY PURCHASE) ORDER 2017. This is an Order under sections 239, 240 and 250 of the Highways Act 1980, which, if confirmed, will authorise Kent County Council to purchase compulsorily the land and the rights over land described therein for the purposes of:-

(a) the improvement of highways forming part of or connected to the A28 Chart Road, Ashford in the County of Kent between and including the Tank roundabout and Matalan roundabout to create a two lane dual carriageway with a bridge, junction improvements and improvements for pedestrians and cyclists;
(b) use of land required by the Highway Authority in connection with the improvement of the highway aforesaid; and
(c) access by the Highway Authority to construct, inspect and maintain the works.

COPIES of the above-mentioned Order and of the plans referred to therein have been deposited and may be seen at all reasonable hours free of charge at Kent County Council, Main Reception, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ; Kent County Council, Highways & Transportation Offices Reception, Henwood Industrial Estate, Javelin Way, Ashford, Kent TN24 8DH and Kent County Council, Ashford Gateway Plus, Church Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 1AS.

COPIES of any proofs of evidence, sent to or by the promoting authority, are also available for inspection at the addresses given above from 31 October 2017.

G PATRICK
Department for Transport
Tyneside House, Skinnerburn Road,
Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7AR
25 September 2017
Ref: NATTRAN/SE/LAO/13

DESCRIPTION OF LAND AND THE NEW RIGHTS

1. All interests in 1230 square metres of grassland and wooded scrubland to the north west of A28 Chart Road and to the north of A28 Matalan roundabout.
2. All interests in 9 square metres of paved area containing electrical pylon infrastructure to the south east of A28 Chart Road and to the north east of A28 Matalan roundabout.
3. All interests in 571 square metres of grassland, wooded scrubland and paved area to the south east of A28 Chart Road and north east of A28 Matalan roundabout.

3A. The right of access over 859 square metres of paved area to construct, inspect and maintain a retaining wall to the south west of former public highway known as Beaver Lane.

4. All interests in 78 square metres of grassland, wooded scrubland and paved area to the south east of Chart Road on former public highway known as Beaver Lane.

4A The right of access over 218 square metres of paved area and wooded scrubland to construct, inspect and maintain a retaining wall to south east of A28 Chart Road on former public highway known as Beaver Lane.

5 All interests in 2629 square metres of grassland, wooded scrubland, paved area and hardstanding to the south east of A28 Chart Road and south of London to Dover railway line.

5A The right of access over 732 square metres of paved area and hardstanding to construct, inspect and maintain a road bridge and a retaining wall to the south east of Chart Road and north east of public highway known as Beaver Lane.

5B The right of access over 223 square metres of paved area and wooded scrubland to construct, inspect and maintain a retaining wall to south east of A28 Chart Road on previous public highway known as Beaver Lane.

6 All interests in 179 square metres of grassed and wooded area within north side of operational corridor of London to Dover railway line.

6A All interests in 56 square metres of grassed and wooded area within south side of operational corridor of London to Dover railway line.

6B The right over 516 square metres of operational corridor of the London to Dover railway line for a road bridge to carry the road over the railway line including the right to construct, keep, inspect and maintain the bridge.

9 All interests, with the exception of Secretary of State for Transport and HS1 Limited's interest, in 1128 square metres of grassland and scrubland to the south east of A28 Chart Road and south of A28 Tank roundabout.

12 All interests in 438 square metres of grassland and wooded scrubland containing underground surface water infrastructure to the south of Sir Henry Brackenbury Road and west of A28 Tank roundabout.

13 All interests in 128 square metres of paved vehicle hardstanding to the south east of A28 Chart Road, north east of London to D

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Box Logistics Ltd of Westmount, Comp Lane, Offham Kent ME19 5PP is applying for a new operating license as follows; To Keep 14 vehicles and 11 trailers at the operating centre Unit Z Paddock Wood Distribution Centre, Paddock Wood Kent TN12 6UU.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

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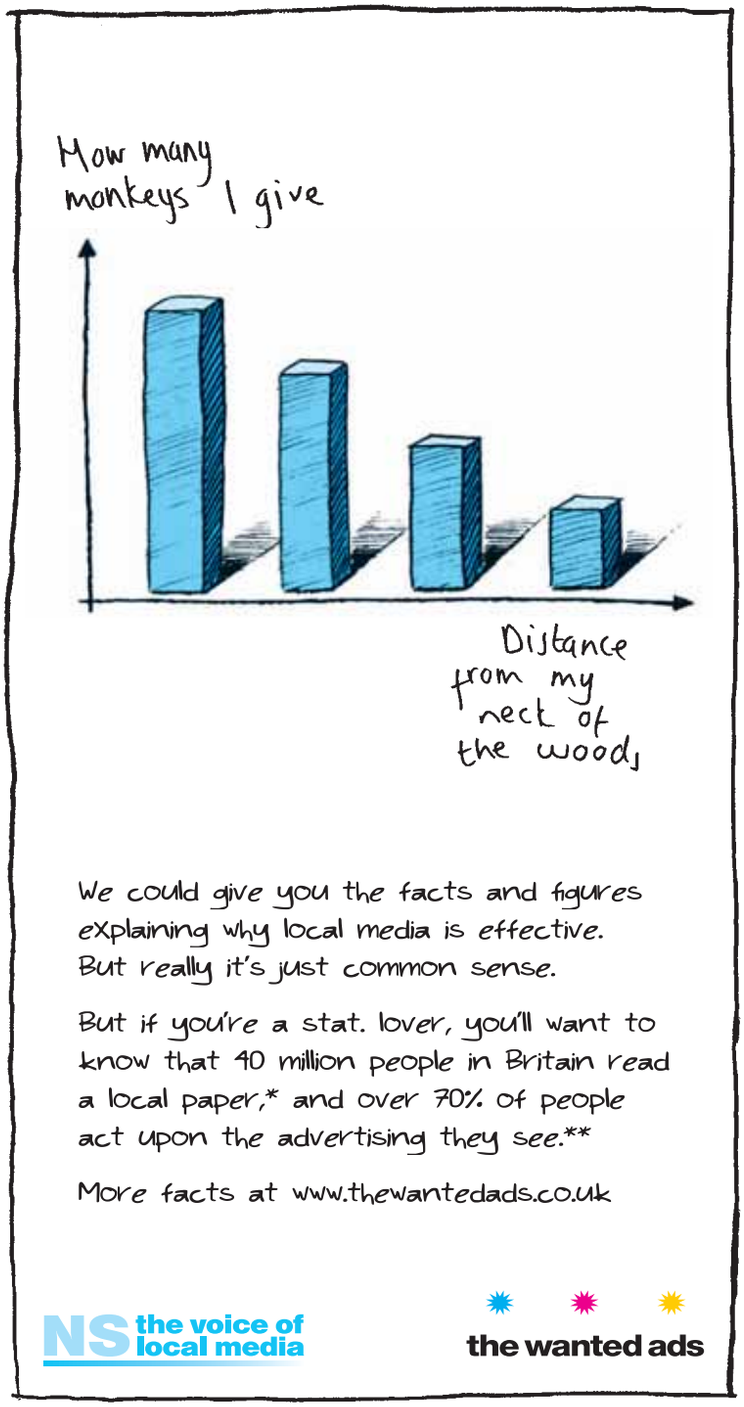

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Ebbsfleet face FA action over 'idiots'

Peter Varney speaks out after two recent pitch invasions

Football

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

EBBSFLEET United's vice-chairman has slammed a "small number of idiots" after the club admitted it may have to increase fencing at one end of its ground to fend off pitch invaders.

Supporters have entered the field of play twice in recent games, and the north Kent outfit are now required to answer to the Football Association as a result.

The club says it will be discussing with the Fleet Supporters Trust the possibility of increasing the height of fencing around the Plough End of the Kuflink Stadium, where both incidents occurred.

It adds that it is not financially viable, nor desirable, to ring the pitch with dozens of stewards, though insists it will be reviewing its stewarding and response procedures over the coming weeks.

Peter Varney said in a statement: "Unfortunately a very small number of idiots are spoiling things for the overwhelming majority of supporters and this has to stop.

"There will be automatic life bans for this behaviour and we are looking at increasing the height of fencing at the Plough End.

"I appreciate this may not be popular with supporters but we have to demonstrate to our governing bodies that we are doing all we can to deal with this moronic behaviour which is tarnishing the good name of the club and penalising the club financially."

In better news for Ebbsfleet, they this week received international clearance to complete the signing of former Manchester United youth striker Febian Brandy.

The 28-year-old, who can also play in an attacking role from the flanks, joins the National League side after Darren McQueen was ruled out for the season with a serious knee injury.

Brandy was most recently playing in Thailand for Ubon UMT United and has international caps for Saint Kitts & Nevis, having played for England from U16-U20 level.

Fleet boss Daryl McMahon told the club's website: "He's moved back to the UK with his family and he's a good age, with ambition still.

"He's a pacy player with skill and he'll need to get a bit fitter but he'll be a threat for us."

BOSS: Vice-chairman Peter Varney (left)

Asher-Smith looking to show 'true potential'

Athletics

ORPINGTON'S Dina Asher-Smith is excited about the prospect of showing her "true potential" at the Commonwealth Games in April.

The 21-year-old sprinter was part of the 75-strong athletics squad Team England announced on Tuesday for the Games in Australia's Gold Coast.

In August Asher-Smith came fourth in the 200 metres, as well as claiming silver with Great Britain's 4x100m relay squad, at the World Championships in London, six months on from breaking her foot.

And when asked about her fitness and feelings ahead of what will be her first Commonwealth Games, the British 100m and 200m record-holder - set to compete in the longer event and the relay in Australia - said: "I'm excited, it would be really, really nice to go to the Commonwealth Games and hopefully show my true potential.

"I'm just hoping I have a nice fluid training block and can go and put together a good performance. I'm just back into training kind of normally now. Last season was always going to be a race against the clock, but I'm fine now.

"April is really early-season, so maybe you won't see the blazing times you'd expect in August, September. But in terms of trying to finish in the medals, I definitely like to think of myself as going for that."

The silver Asher-Smith helped secure was among a total of six medals for Britain in London, with the target having been six to eight.

Dartford sprinter Adam Gemili, who won relay gold, will be another Commonwealth medal hopeful.

STAR: Dina Asher-Smith

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Tom Pyman** on **01233653477**

Crawley commits his future to home county

PROMISING Kent batsman Zak Crawley has signed a long-term contract extension after a breakthrough season.

The academy graduate, 19, made his senior debut in 2017 after scoring three centuries in the second XI earlier in the year.

Bromley–born Crawley scored 62 against the West Indies on his first class debut at The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence and played four matches in the Specsavers County Championship and once in the Royal London One-Day Cup.

The 6ft 5in right-hander, who has played for Holmesdale and Sevenoaks Vine in his formative years, said: "I've really enjoyed my cricket this season. I started slowly but found some good form and it was great to get a few opportunities with the first team.

"Making my professional debut was a dream come true and to do it for my home county was even more special. We have a deep batting line-up so I know I have to perform and keep working hard on my game to earn a spot in the first XI."

PROMISING: Zak Crawley

PRODIGY: Luke Hopkins in action. Picture: Colin Port

Teenage star Hopkins ends season on high

TEENAGE sensation Luke Hopkins hailed a "great" end to his racing year as the season came to a close at Donington Park at the weekend.

At the end of a race-packed year that has seen the 15-year-old ride in the British Superbike Moto3 series, at world level in the World Supersport 300 championship, Luke received special dispensation to compete in the Thundersport 600 Elite class, where he claimed impressive seventh and tenth place finishes.

The Sittingbourne star said: "It's been hard this weekend. The weather was really windy, especially down the back straight. There were also some very good riders out there.

"But to come away with a seventh and two tenth place finishes was a good result and a great way to end the season."

Trio handed England C chance

THREE of Kent's most promising non-league footballers have been called up to represent England C next month.

Ebbsfleet's Jack Powell, Bromley's Josh Rees and Maidstone's Alex Wynter all received the call after being invited to take part in a training camp for the national side in Lilleshall ahead of the clash with Slovakia on November 8.

Stones boss Jay Saunders said: "I am delighted for Wynts. He's taken his performances for us and earned himself a place in the England C squad. As a sportsman it's an honour to represent your country and he thoroughly deserves this opportunity to showcase himself at international level."

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